The Nation.

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EDITORIAL

REMEMBER THE HOME FRONT

The State of the Union Message has become a ritual of denial. The President enters, is applauded by a demographically unrepresentative group of Americans, mouths a few homilies and glosses over serious issues facing the nation. George Bush followed the script, but luckily for him he was able to speak as the leader of a nation at war. This provided him with a lot of patriotic filler to camouflage the meager offerings he had on domestic issues.

To deal with the economic hardship faced by millions, Bush proposed to study a long-term capital gains tax break. He called for public school vouchers, not increased resources for education; a modest health care program of "prevention initiatives," not a needed overhaul of the medical system. He took credit for a national highway program and energy plan already demanded by many in Congress. He pushed a banking reform program that is unlikely to address the problems of the nation's financial system.

He said nothing about the once-vaunted peace dividend—a casualty of the gulf war. Yet further cuts in the defense budget could sensibly be made. Vast sums are still dedicated to unneeded nuclear weapons and obsolete cold war scenarios. The United States is spending $133 billion for its armed forces to defend Western Europe—nearly $20 billion of which goes toward its military presence in Norway alone. But it would, of course, be unthinkable to repatriate some of that money to alleviate suffering at home—unemployment, AIDS, urban blight, the neglect of children, insufficient health care.

Instead President Bush summons the nation to a "great struggle" for "decency and humanity" "halfway around the world." In the struggle for those values at home he is AWOL.

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BEAT THE DEVIL

THE PRESS AND THE 'JUST WAR'

ALEXANDER COCKBURN

In Iraq's case the concept of bombing as an essentially wholesome liaison between morality and Western technological prowess goes back to 1919, when the Royal Air Force asked Winston Churchill for permission to use chemical weapons "against recalcitrant Arabs as an experiment." Churchill, then in the War Office, rejected timid naysayers. "I do not understand this squeamishness about the use of gas," he wrote. "I am strongly in favour of using poisoned gas against uncivilised tribes [among whom he counted Bolsheviks, gas being used in the war of intervention]. . . . It is not necessary to use only the most deadly gasses; gasses can be used which would cause great inconvenience and would spread a lively terror and yet would leave no serious permanent effects on most of those affected." Chemical weapons, Churchill concluded, represent "the application of Western science to modern warfare. . . . We cannot in any circumstance acquiesce in the non-utilisation of any weapons which are available to procure a speedy termination of the disorder which prevails on the frontier."

Journalism annuls history, never more so than in war, where it promotes a depthless present, most tragicomically in television "coverage," the reporters—actors in fact—having mostly as little relationship to reality as the Greek chorus in the *Agamemnon* debating among themselves what Clytemnestra is up to ("Is that a noise I hear?") as she hacks the King to death.

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LETTERS.

PEN FRIENDS

New York City

Alexander Cockburn in his December 31 "Beat the Devil" complains that "intellectuals like the folks at PEN are inclined to sit on their hands" when it comes to defending the rights of Palestinians. If Cockburn were to visit the PEN office and look up our Freedom-to-Write Committee's files, he would see that we have consistently responded to Israeli violations of Palestinians' right to freedom of expression. For example, we have adopted the prominent Palestinian journalist Sam'an Khoury, who is currently in prison, as an honorary member; we have publicly appealed to Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir to reopen all Palestinian universities; and we have contacted the presidents of six leading U.S. universities and many campus presses, inviting them to add their voices to ours. Indeed, we are gratified that both Hana Nasser, the exiled president of Birzeit University, and our board member Edward Said have recently expressed their approval of our efforts.

Regarding the death threats issued by the Kach Party against Said and his colleagues, we cannot allow to go unanswered Cockburn's outrageous contention that our members may "secretly wish the bombers well." We in PEN are always alarmed at the use of death threats as a means of censorship and, in this instance, we are particularly distressed that Said and his colleagues are being ruthlessly victimized merely for exercising their right to freedom of expression. *Larry McMurtry, president*
PEN American Center

'PROFESSOR OF TERROR'

Notre Dame, Ind.

Alexander Cockburn raises a very important question: Why has there been no surge of support for Edward Said, Clovis Maksoud, Anthony Lewis and several others following the death threats made against them by the Kach Party? He provides a partial answer, that many intellectuals are cowed into silence by the likes of Cynthia Ozick and Charles Rembar. However, this is a question that deserves to be examined more deeply. It should be pointed out, for instance, that the selection of Said as a prime target by the Israeli terrorists did not emanate parthenogenetically from the minds of a band of lunatics—that is, it cannot be conveniently attributed, like many violent attacks by Israelis on Palestinians, to an isolated manifestation of derangement. Said has been set up as a target, at least in part, by certain intellectuals with respectable credentials who are published in periodicals generally considered to be reputable.

When Edward Alexander, a professor of English at Tel Aviv University and the University of Washington, wrote a scurrilous broadside labeling Said a "professor of terror," an "ideologue of terror" and "a bloody minded intellectual spokesman [of the P.L.O.]," *Commentary* had no compunction publishing it (August 1989). Indeed, *Commentary* provided Alexander with another three pages in a later issue (December 1989) to spew even more vitriol as a response to those who dared express their outrage and defend Said in letters to the editor. The more sober *Tikkun* drew its readers' attention to Said in its November/December 1989 issue through an article by another professor of English, Mark Krupnick of the University of Chicago. Krupnick's tone, unlike Alexander's, is not quite inflammatory; he affects the rhetoric of reasonableness. Still, he condescendingly describes Said as a Palestinian who is driven to "rage" by his resentment and envy of the superiority and richness of Jewish culture! Why, one wonders, did Krupnick feel compelled to analyze and explicate Said's "rage" while devoting nary a word to Alexander's raving fury? Krupnick concludes his article by declaring that his sympathy (after all, his rhetoric of reasonableness requires a token gesture of magnanimity) for the Palestinians is tempered by the "fear and distrust" that comes from "being the object of Palestinian rage." So Said and by extension Palestinians in general, when not terrorists, are, at best, consumed and blinded by rage—in either case to be distrusted and feared. As long as this mentality prevails, why should one expect anything but "the tomblike silence from his fellow intellectuals" that, as Cockburn points out, has followed the death threat to Said? Past attacks on Said have prepared the ground for the current silence. Yet, as Said has helped point out, our culture and history have taught many of our leading intellectuals and politicians how to resist calls for justice and moral responsibility by blaming the victims. *Joseph A. Buttigieg*

COCKBURN REPLIES

Ardmore, Ireland

I never said all PEN members would raise a cheer if an assassin's bullet or bomb found its mark, merely some of them. Anyway, it's a relief to know that Larry McMurtry and his colleagues feel "alarmed" and "distressed," as opposed to cowed, which is what they mostly are by Ozick and the others. After my column on the matter appeared, Eric Bentley sent me the following letter:

> About your entirely justified impression that members of PEN (American Center) have been "cowed into skirting the issue" of threats against Said and others. Some of us were not cowed, we were overruled and silenced. Before these particular threats were made, I wrote a letter for publication in PEN's periodical objecting to remarks about Said by Cynthia Ozick. I thought these remarks scurrilous and felt sure they would not even have been published had Ozick not enjoyed celebrity status. PEN made no apology for Ozick and would not publish my letter. I would be glad to join in any effort to protect the lives of all those threatened, including Farrakhan. *Alexander Cockburn*

SLIPPED UP, DRESSED DOWN

Leggett, Calif.

Günter Grass, in John Leonard's informative article [Dec. 24, 1990], refers to one of his characters, Dörte, as wearing her "Indian sarong." Dörte must surely have been wearing a sari. A sarong is a colorful Malayan skirt worn by both sexes. Decades ago, I saw a humorous filler in *Reader's Digest* that told of a writer who had made exactly that slip. When corrected he replied, "I'm sari, I was sarong." *Mark Drake*

RED SQUAD RUNAROUND

Mt. Vernon, Ohio

An advertisement in your October 1 issue told how to find out if the Red Squad of Detroit had information on you. I sent a request to them and they sent me a form. I had to sign it, have it notarized and return it before they would let me know if they had a file on me. A few weeks later I heard from them again. This time I was told that if I wanted the information they may have, I would have to come to Detroit to get it. They didn't say they had anything, and they didn't say they didn't; just come to Detroit if I wanted to find out. It seems to me to be another way of keeping secret anything they may have. No doubt there are people spread from coast to coast and border to border who would have to go to Detroit to find out *if* there was anything the Red Squad had. And the police want us to trust them? Like hell. *James F. Kinney*

CLARIFICATIONS

The Military Families Support Network, listed in the February 4 issue, has chapters in forty-nine states. It works to support the troops and organize against the politics of war. It does not provide resister counseling. Its new number is (414) 964-3859.

The National Association for Black Veterans is a pro-peace organization that advocates for veterans' rights and for the fulfillment of their unmet needs. Its full address is Box 11432, Milwaukee, WI 53211-0432.

Troy Duster's *Backdoor to Eugenics*, reviewed by Alice Wexler [Feb. 4], is also available in paperback for $13.95.

The Nation welcomes letters—typed, double spaced and no longer than 300 words, please. Letters may be edited for reasons of space.

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EDITORIALS.

A Just Cause?

As President Bush moved inexorably toward the assault of January 16, a *New York Times*/CBS News poll reported a finding that both defined and promoted a mood of national self-absorption that makes moral discourse about the gulf war nearly impossible. How many American casualties, the pollsters wanted to know, would respondents accept and still think the war was worthwhile? This phrasing of the question, though it spoke the language of life and death, of costs and gains, did not so much elicit a moral response as preclude the making of one. For what the pollsters did not ask was, How many *Iraqi* casualties would Americans be willing to accept as the price of war? In presuming that Americans have no moral sentiments about the pain of others, *Times*/CBS was not reporting a fact about our moral views but rather obliterating the space within which they could be expressed, so that even as thoughtful a writer as Anthony Lewis can say of the gulf war, "It is a just war—if not, as I believe, a wise one," without even raising the question of how this "just" war is being conducted.

If the gulf war is not to degenerate further into one of the most wretched episodes in American imperial history, the space for moral discussion must be reclaimed. That will not be easy, for the issues have changed dramatically since January 16. Geopolitical rationales for the use of deadly force, whether as cynical as the price of oil or the level of unemployment, or as sophisticated as "regional stability" and the prevention of even more bloodshed in the future, never attracted

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a clear majority of Americans; nor is there any reason to believe they do so now. Instead, the American people appear overwhelmingly to uphold the position of "supporting the troops"—a position made all the more poignant for those of us who oppose the war by the fact that those troops are disproportionately men and women of color, who traditionally get short shrift from American society.

To define a moral position on the war is not in the abstract as difficult as it might appear. Anthony Lewis to the contrary, it is clear what a just war is not: It is not a war in which, however "surgically" air power may be used, the lives of Iraqi civilians are considered expendable in order to save the lives of American troops. Or in which unlimited numbers of Iraqi soldiers may be killed in a trade-off for American lives. President Bush's reference to the Geneva conventions notwithstanding, nothing in the traditional rules of war has survived the introduction of strategic air power, which by intention makes civilians the object of violence. The concept of "collateral damage" is a monstrous sophistry—in Anglo-Saxon criminal law, a man who throws a hand grenade into a crowd is rightly presumed to have intended the death of everyone he kills, not merely the individual he may have been aiming at. Nor can the mongering of comparative atrocity stories change this picture, for Saddam at his worst is merely following our historical example; leaving aside our use of air power in this war, nothing he has yet done equals the savagery of the American assault on Vietnamese civil society, nor do complaints about his treatment of prisoners come cleanly from a nation whose troops routinely threw Vietcong prisoners out of helicopters after interrogating them.

A moral or just war must meet the criterion of "proportionality"; that is, the costs must be commensurate with the objectives of the war—and the objectives must be realizable without incurring unendurable costs. A just war in the gulf would hypothetically have been one fought after all alternative means of conflict resolution had been tried and had failed. It would have been a war on behalf of the collective security of nations, as authorized by those nations in the forum of the United Nations, without arm-twisting or bribery by the United States. It would have been a war employing international peacekeeping troops (supported by whatever sea power or air cover they could muster) under U.N. command, fighting for a limited goal—the withdrawal of Iraqi forces from Kuwait.

The problem is that once George Bush made the fatal decision to go on the offensive, quite different values—national and familial loyalty—came into play, values that are in conflict with the principles of just war. It may be immoral under just-war criteria to kill thousands of residents of Baghdad in order to make an eventual ground attack by American troops less costly, but quite acceptable by the standards of family and country. How, in any event, does one make the contrary argument to the families and neighbors of those troops?

The task we face, then, is to explain how these fundamental loyalties can be compatible with opposition to the war—not in the sense of justifying our own patriotism but in persuading our fellow Americans that they can oppose the war without opposing their brothers, sisters, sons and daughters in Saudi Arabia. The simple slogan "Bring the troops home now" will not do, for how can any President possibly do that, especially if he has the apparent authorization of both the world community of nations and his own Congress? He cannot, and will not, drop millions of tons of bombs on a foreign people to force their surrender, or to prepare the way for a counterattack into Kuwait, and then simply say it was all a mistake and call the whole thing off. But that does not mean that there is no way to help other Americans define an agenda that is different from his, and that ultimately entails the recall of our ground forces before they are irrevocably committed to battle. It's not Saddam Hussein who needs to be offered a way out but George Bush.

The essential outlines of such an agenda are already in place; they are not affected by the U.S.-Soviet "offer" of January 29, which still in effect insists on Saddam's unconditional surrender. What the peace movement must fight for instead is a true unilateral initiative, a significant (not merely momentary) cessation of hostilities. That should be followed not by the reiteration of the demand for withdrawal from Kuwait but by an attempt to find ground for negotiations that do not proceed, as every past "offer" to Saddam has proceed-

WHAT DOES HE MEAN?

"Our troops . . . will not be asked to fight with one hand tied behind their back."
—President Bush, national address, January 16

Tons of bombs dropped on Vietnam by the U.S.: 4,600,000 [1]

Tonnage dropped on Cambodia and Laos: 2,000,000 [1]

Tonnage dropped by the Allies in World War II: 3,000,000 [2]

Gallons of Agent Orange sprayed: 11,200,000 [1]

Gallons of other herbicides: 8,000,000 [1]

Tons of napalm dropped: 400,000 [1]

Bomb craters: 25,000,000 [3]

South Vietnamese hamlets destroyed by the war: 9,000 (out of 15,000) [4]

Acres of farmland destroyed: 25,000,000 [4]

Acres of forest destroyed: 12,000,000 [4]

Vietnamese killed: 1,921,000 [5]

Cambodians killed (1969-75): 200,000 [5]

Laotians killed (1964-73): 100,000 [5]

Vietnamese, Cambodians & Laotians wounded: 3,200,000 [5]

Total refugees by 1975: 14,305,000 [5]

American troops who served in Vietnam: 2,150,000 [6]

American troops killed: 57,900 [7]

Sources: (1) Jim Harrison, "Air War in Vietnam," recent conference paper; (2) Howard Zinn, author, *A People's History of the United States*; (3) Marilyn Young, *The Vietnam Wars*; (4) Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent*; (5) "Indochina Newsletter," Nov.-Dec. 1982; (6) Lawrence Baskir and William Strauss, *Chance and Circumstance*; (7) National Archives. Thanks for inspiration to "Harper's Index."

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ed, accompanied by ultimatums and the threat of renewed war. Saddam should be offered the option of negotiation, not with George Bush (that would surely be intolerable under the circumstances) but with a delegation from the U.N. Security Council, or the Secretary General, or the prime ministers of other nations—Pakistan, Iran, the Soviet Union, Spain or Cuba—who might be able to speak to him without appearing to be stalking-horses for a new American empire. The necessary content of any such negotiations is crystal clear: The taboo word "linkage" must be uttered without equivocation. It must be the peace movement's first priority to break that taboo. Only in that way can Saddam himself be forced to confront the Palestinian issue, rather than being allowed to use it as propaganda.

Saddam has said that he will never surrender Kuwait. We have no way of knowing whether he means that or under what circumstances, given what incentives, he might change his mind. We have tried the policy of force, and it has not worked. Saddam indeed might conclude that having outlasted the air war he can also outlast a return to the policy of sanctions, the only alternative to all-out war if negotiations fail. But people ought to be able to learn from the results of their actions. What we Americans should have learned by now is that, as the peace movement has argued all along, the costs of force were always too high proportionate to the goal—withdrawal from Kuwait—that we all seek. The peace movement should revive the lost arguments for sanctions.

For the first time since the end of World War II, the United States is in a position to "negotiate from strength" in the true meaning of that phrase. We have demonstrated our strength beyond all doubt; we need not fear to negotiate. Superior strength can produce destruction, vindictiveness and brutality; it can also produce magnanimity, even or especially toward those who seem least to deserve it.

We should not be afraid to pose the issue as one of statesmanship versus savagery. And above all we should make clear that we call on George Bush to make the statesmanlike choice not because Saddam Hussein deserves to save face, or find a way out, or retain his power. Rather we will attempt to persuade the President to do this because, wholly aside from the damage that the continued neglect of our own vital needs is doing to our social fabric, neither the people of Iraq nor American soldiers deserve the carnage that is likely to be the result of the fatal course now unfolding before us.

Word of Mouth

"The frontiers of states are either large rivers, or chains of mountains, or deserts. Of all these obstacles to the march of an army, the most difficult to overcome is the desert; mountains come next, and large rivers occupy the third place."

—Napoleon

* * *

"Last week, the Pentagon sent to the gulf 100,000 body bags, as we called them in the Second War. But since body bag has an unpleasant ring, it is now called a 'human remains pouch.' There is something insistently cheerful about the word 'pouch.' One thinks of marsupial pouches and Australia and the dread Paul Hogan."

—Gore Vidal at Town Hall, Los Angeles, January 15

* * *

"Those of us who believe that to support the troops we must oppose [Bush's policies] are not, at this moment, well understood or popular. We are in a rather small minority, and polls show that many people are angry with us.

"We could dodge much of that anger in the way many politicians in Congress are doing just now, the ones—nearly half of Congress—who just two weeks ago voted against war, agreeing with many of us that Saddam Hussein's aggression needed to be confronted by economic sanctions and military containment but that war was not the answer. Since the war started, four days after their vote, nearly all of them have been very quiet or have come out for 'victory.'

"Like them, we could keep our heads down and stay silent for the moment, until a tide of body bags drifting home from a U.S. ground offensive shifts the tide of public opinion in our direction. But that would mean to let our silence—like theirs—be counted as assent. It would be to give up all effort, and all hope, to avert those casualties on both sides.

"There is a time when silence is a lie; when silence is complicity; when silence is betrayal.

"Facing this juggernaut, we cannot know what effect, if any, we can have on the course of events. But we owe it to our troops and other potential victims of this war, we owe it to our country and to ourselves, to speak the truth: the truth about ourselves, what we believe, what we know in our hearts, what we reject and what we want.

"The truth—for me . . . is it not for you?—is that it was wrong to start this war, and it is wrong to continue it; and we want, we demand, that it be ended, now, *before* a ground war and other escalations take the lives of 10,000 American and hundreds of thousands of Iraqi human beings. The truth is that the continuation and expansion of this war represents a

(*Continued on Page 201*)

★

Gorby's Our Boy

This Gorbachev's our boychik even now—
Although his perestroika *team is out,*
And in the Baltics troops and tanks roll in,
And commissars again exert their clout.
But as the K.G.B. regains its strength
And stone-faced men in overcoats get busy,
Some people here are saying of our boy,
"Yes ours, but just who else's boychik is he?"

Calvin Trillin

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BEAT THE DEVIL.

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

Febrile discussion of the minutiae of war coverage—how much censorship in Riyadh, how much lying in the Pentagon briefing room—itself acts as a form of censorship, for it too avoids history.

From Churchill's view that gas bombs might, if properly applied, be merely "inconvenient" to their targets, it is but a short jump to today's hearty applause for Tomahawks and laser-guided bombs as they descend upon Iraq, overture to tomorrow's calls for understanding and approval when it becomes necessary to use nuclear weapons to overwhelm Iraqi intransigence. The U.S. is already talking about using "non-lethal" riot gas, as a humanitarian measure.

"This is, in part, a didactic war," the columnist George Will announced as American bombers commenced the task of reverting Iraq's economy to the nineteenth century. In Will's view, the crime of Iraq ("a brittle, over-reaching tinpot country") lay in "transgressing values most clearly enunciated by the United States, the symbol of modern political values and cultural modernity"; and "the hope" is that the war will "pry parts of Arabia into participation in the modernity that is capable of such technological prowess and moral purpose. Both that prowess and that purpose derive from freedom. . . . The mighty U.S. sword guarantees the pre-eminence of the American pen."

Similarly transported by claims of unerring accuracy in the West's bombardments, Clifford Longley wrote in *The Times* of London, "Developments in the technology of war alter the morality of war. The latest British and American weapons used in the Gulf seem to have new properties both militarily and morally. War is at last becoming more 'user friendly.'" The British press repays study, since it relates robustly what is often tactfully elided on the other side of the Atlantic by the inheritors of the white man's burden. In *The Daily Telegraph* John Keegan, military historian and "defense editor," ruminated comfortably that "this is the strangest part of this strange war. Never before has a population lived in something close to immunity from enemy attack while everything that makes everyday life tolerable is destroyed about its ears."

Of course the bombs and missiles were striking civilians and the "culture" Bush presumes to spare, but by this time the West's press, eased by the thought of "accuracy" and "precision," was ceasing to take much of an interest in what exactly the West's commanders might be coming to consider a military asset. In the end everything is a military asset, and so the "degrading" and "denial" of water (pumping stations, irrigation, etc.), cultivation, roads, bus terminals and other "strategic assets" begins.

Despite Churchill's urgings that the R.A.F. use mustard gas, technological problems prevented such deliveries, but by 1920 the British Army was using gas shells in Iraq "with excellent moral effect." High explosives ("conventional weapons") were used when villages did not pay their taxes. The R.A.F. then began dropping bombs with delayed-action fuses (as is now being done on Iraqi runways). Since village children were already playing with dud bombs, one senior officer protested that the result would be "blowing a lot of children to pieces." What would be called in today's press briefings "collateral damage" (dead and mutilated children) did occur because the R.A.F. dropped these bombs to stop tribesmen from working their fields after dark (our friend "strategic assets" again).

Prominent among the R.A.F. officers thus engaged was Arthur Harris, who later directed the British bomber offensive against Germany in World War II, most notoriously against Dresden. (Churchill, by the way, was eager to gas-bomb German cities.) In the London *Sunday Times* last week, just as the hosannas to "smart weapons" and the just war were rising to their peak, a man called Williams wrote in from Nottingham to comment on the Dresden bombing. He said he'd been a navigator in the attack: "We were told it was to be a 'panic' raid, that the market-place would be full of refugees streaming in from the east, and that our aiming point would be the market square. We had no choice. We bombed as instructed and killed, I would estimate, nearly 100,000 people (we will never know), mainly women and children. I was horrified when we learned later what we had done and even more horrified when we were later filmed at a mock propaganda briefing when the original briefing instructions were reversed; but I cannot say more, as I would be in trouble under the official secrets act. We were told the raid would 'put the fear of God up Jerry' and that it would shorten the war. It didn't."

Back in 1923 one of the R.A.F.'s men, Air Commodore Lionel Charlton, resigned his position as senior staff officer in Iraq after he visited a hospital in Diwaniya and saw victims of the bombing. Twenty-two years later navigator Williams reacted to the explicit instruction to bomb a marketplace full of refugees with the thought, as he now recalls it, that "we had no choice." Today, no one except the recipients of their lethal cargoes conceives of a culpable linkage between the man pressing the bomb-release button or the missile trigger and the consequential victims.

The 'Unavoidable' War

The war is "just," Bush declared to Congress, and he had been preceded to this moral eminence by the doyen of liberal commentators, Anthony Lewis, who, after nine days of bombing, reassured his readers, "It is a just war." Set in the depthless present, amid fake-perspective murals of a bogus past, journalism in times of war is mostly moral persuasion of the citizenry that the war is fought by decent people for honorable objectives. The claim that war against Iraq is just followed from the premise that it was "unavoidable," which in turn followed from the claim that neither had Saddam Hussein shown the slightest flexibility in heeding the calls of the United Nations, nor were economic sanctions showing signs of being successful in forcing him to do so.

With virtually no exception the press in both the United States and Britain omitted all report, let alone critical discussion, of Iraq's negotiating positions, as publicly proclaimed on August 12, as communicated to National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft later that month, and as relayed to the White House through Yugoslav emissaries in the Non-Aligned

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ALEXANDER COCKBURN

Movement in late December. As regards the August 12 negotiating position setting forth the link between Iraq's occupation of Kuwait and other occupations and territorial disputes in the region, *The Financial Times* declared in an editorial that it was not without substance. The American press, in a few instances, merely sketched its terms in inconspicuous stories. The December overture was reported only by Knut Royce in *Newsday*, who had in August disclosed another negotiating offer relayed to the White House. Although the three known positions varied in detail, they were similar in overall thrust: regional linkage in the form of a conference on security and territorial disputes in the Middle East; mutual withdrawal of Iraqi troops from Kuwait and of the U.S.-led forces from Saudi Arabia; negotiated removal of weapons of mass destruction—chemical, biological, nuclear—from the region.

At no point did those offers make the slightest impact on public discussion of the pros and cons of going to war, even though it was widely acknowledged that war would be a bloody and costly affair. The effortless victory of the Bush Administration and its British lieutenant in preparing the ground for a "just war" was confirmed by the contemptuous welcome given the French initiative of January 14 and 15. No matter that the French proffered it for the most cynical of motives, or that Iraq by that time was, with some reason given the Geneva encounter between Aziz and Baker, hostile to such overtures. The French proposal merely stated that Iraq should withdraw from Kuwait, adding the language of a codicil appended to a resolution adopted by the U.N. Security Council in December. That codicil, whose language the United States had not permitted in the resolution itself, declared the need for a regional conference at an appropriate time. Such was the infamous French initiative greeted with derision by politicians and commentators alike. Among the innumerable lies in Bush's State of the Union Address, none was more egregious than his assertion that he had "tried every diplomatic avenue to avoid war." He even invoked the efforts of Algerian President Bendjedid, though it was the U.S. that pressured Saudi Arabia to refuse to see him, thus sinking his initiative.

There has been much talk about the "world community" and its unity against Mesopotamian evil; far less about the near total isolation of those countries wholeheartedly for war, "a tiny minority in the world," as *The Financial Times* frankly conceded on January 19. Instead of any useful report on this isolation, the press embarked in earnest on the publication of war scenarios, designed to soften up public opinion for mass murder. Many of those, including exuberant prophecies of a three-day conflict, were overweening and sarcastic about the fiber of the Iraqi fighting man. *The Observer*'s correspondent Colin Smith reported from Saudi Arabia on January 13 that "a few weeks ago, a middle-ranking British officer, who will be in the thick of the fighting if war comes, confided to me that he thought their main problem would be accepting the surrender of thousands of Iraqi prisoners. . . . 'What we're going to have to do is give them a boiled sweet and tell them to head south.' "

While opinion-formers and retired military officers expounded their theories with relish, men of God were asked to give the just war the luster of ecclesiastical sanction. In the United States most prominent church folk denounced the impending war, with predictable exceptions such as Bernard Cardinal Law, whose outlook can be gauged from his enthusiastic support for the proposed canonization of Queen Isabella of Spain, founder of the Inquisition, scourge of Islam and Jewry, patroness of Christopher Columbus. In Britain the prelates were more accommodating. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Robert Runcie, commended the just war to his congregation, assuring it that the "harsh reality of human history is that the use of force has been caused as much by human virtues . . . as it has been by . . . wickedness."

National history conditions moral posture. The Catholic Primate of All Ireland, Dr. Cahal Daly, declared that the principle of the "just war" is not applicable, that "we begin to talk of 'surgical strikes' and we forget about the gore and the grime and the mangled bodies on the ground." The Pope similarly expressed his opposition to war.

The only major Western newspaper I know of that took a clear moral position against war was the Dublin *Sunday Tribune*—Ireland's only serious Sunday paper—and if its terms of reference and citation seem a trifle unusual we should realize therefrom how degraded conventional editorial discussion has come to be, weighing the pros and cons of mass killing in the "national interest" with the same aplomb as Churchill. In its January 20 edition, the *Tribune* began by quoting the letter of an Irish woman describing the accidental death, falling while doing acrobatics on a bridge outside Dublin, of her daughter, and then said:

> That same morning [as Julie died] hundreds, maybe thousands . . . of mothers or fathers in Iraq were heartbroken because their . . . Julies had been killed, not through some action of their own but by bombs dropped from the air by Allied forces. This is the reality of this war in the Gulf. It is inflicting the most terrible physical and emotional pain on people who are *entirely innocent*. . . . It is no use saying that these people are not the *intended* victims. The fact is that the nature of the bombing that is now undertaken quite clearly has as a foreseeable consequence the infliction of terrible harm on people who are entirely innocent. (The Catholic doctrine of double effect, whereby an action is all right if the intention is not improper even though the clearly foreseeable consequence may be absolutely improper, is an unfortunate piece of Augustinian sophistry which has corrupted moral debate.) . . . The contention that war was unavoidable is an abuse of language as well as of sensibility. War was absolutely avoidable by the Allies choosing simply not to inflict war. . . . The Allied forces . . . have tried hard to assure the world that "everything possible is being done to avoid civilian casualties." Again, this does violence to language. Clearly everything possible is not being done to avoid civilian casualties, for "everything possible" would include the avoidance of the bombing of Baghdad for instance.

'At Peace With Himself'

With the first missile that he unleashed upon Iraq the American President placed himself in moral symmetry with

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his Iraqi opposite number. Saddam Hussein declared that U.N. resolutions and international commitments pledged across the space of many years on the matter of the territories seized and occupied by Israel had been futile, and that force of arms had been his only recourse. George Bush, permitting himself a shorter span for his patience to expire (it seems clear enough that he resolved upon war at least as early as last September and probably by the first week in August), declared the same. To achieve an exact equivalence Saddam Hussein would have to be equipped with "smart," and therefore moral, weapons such as those discharged upon Iraq with heavy loss of life, rather than the Scuds, which by the end of the first week of the war had done far less damage than is wrought by Israeli troops in a busy day on the West Bank.

One could read with sympathy accounts by Israelis of the horror of sitting in sealed rooms wearing gas masks while Palestinians cheered. But few journalists and no Israelis quoted gave a thought for Palestinians closeted in their homes day after day under rigorous curfew, tear-gassed, tortured in prisons, their homes demolished by bulldozers with far greater efficiency and no public uproar. Since the *intifada* began, according to the excellent Palestine Human Rights Information Center, some 900 Palestinians have died, 88 from gassing; 1,726 homes have been destroyed.*

No such moral symmetries and asymmetries have disturbed the joy of prominent Western commentators. Jim Hoagland, who has rapidly established himself as one of the silliest and most pompous columnists in the English-speaking world, announced to the readers of *The Washington Post*:

> War is establishing an American credibility in the Middle East that diplomacy alone failed to achieve. A week of war has established a position of American even-handedness and involvement absent from two decades of the "peace process." . . . There could be no clearer sign that Desert Storm is proceeding well.

Meanwhile, the State Department was issuing travel advisories for U.S. citizens to avoid more or less every acre of the Muslim world; and, in a *coup de main* virtually unparalleled in the history of military and diplomatic endeavor, an American President was uniting the populations of North Africa, the Levant, the Indian subcontinent, Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines in execration of his country's actions.

In Baghdad itself, the bombing speedily united the populace behind a President many had loathed. My brother Patrick, in the al-Rashid Hotel, noticed the change after the first days of bombardment. "Perhaps," he later wrote in *The Independent*, "Iraq in 1991 will see a repeat of the bombing campaigns against Britain in 1940-1, Germany in 1942-5, Vietnam in 1964-75 and Lebanon in 1982-4. In each case air power appeared attractive as a way to maximise leverage on the enemy while minimising one's own casualties. There is no doubt that being bombed is frightening, but it is a threat so general in its application that it creates more enemies than it intimidates. On Wednesday, many Iraqis would openly say that going into Kuwait was Saddam's business, not theirs. By the weekend it was almost impossible to meet anybody who did not feel that Iraq would, and should fight."

A "just war" is hospitable to every self-deception on the part of those waging it, none more than the illusion of the Christian leaders of the West that the enemy is only Saddam Hussein, that all his troops are, so to speak, chained to their machine guns as were—in the legend of World War I propagandists—the Germans in their trenches. In the plans of the Western commanders and the articles by their courtiers in the press there is an emptiness where there should be people; there are no Iraqis or Kurds or Turkomans, which is why it will—should the need emerge—be no great moral agony to drop a weapon of mass destruction on them, thus far outstripping Saddam Hussein in threat and deed.

When public rhetoric (the intention had always been there) of the Western coalition shifted from eviction of Iraq from Kuwait to the demolition of Iraq as a modern society and the trial and execution of its leader, there was no great uproar (except throughout the entire Arab and Muslim world, where the clamor was urgent enough to compel the United States to backtrack, even—in consort with the Soviet Union—to hint at linkage). From his dignified eminence as ex officio State Department official, Thomas Friedman of *The New York Times* wrote calmly that "historians may question whether it was ever right for the Bush Administration to make the 'liberation of Kuwait' a prime war aim instead of focusing exclusively on dismantling Iraq's offensive capabilities [i.e., bombing the country into the Middle Ages], which, after all, were the real threat to stability in the gulf and therefore the real threat to U.S. interests."

So much for the just war. Christendom is back where it started in 1919, calculating the "moral effect" of high explosives and gas shells on the wogs. The parallels are so exact as to be haunting, as can be learned from David Omissi's absorbing history, *Air Power and Colonial Control* (Manchester University Press, 1990). Churchill, desperate to revive his own political fortunes, was eager to secure British domination of the Mesopotamian oilfields. The nascent Royal Air Force was anxious to prove its worth and thus secure a larger slice of the arms budget from the army and navy. The British government, fearful of impending economic depression, wanted colonial control on the cheap, in terms of both cash and lives. In Omissi's words, "The reduction of the garrison, the elevation of Faisal [the British puppet installed in Baghdad as King of Iraq], the payment of subsidies to Arab leaders and the purchase of French acquiescence were all aspects of a single strategy of indirect rule intended to reduce the costs of imperialism in Iraq. Its ultimate success depended on air control." And thus the tribesmen, Kurds and Arabs, began to receive the bombs; thus too was Iraq saved for the British oilmen and tax collectors from renewed Ottoman appetites.

"Words," John Donne wrote in a letter, "are our subtillest and delicatest outward creatures, being composed of thoughts

(*Continued on Page 201*)

* The P.H.R.I.C.'s finances have been a casualty of war and recession. To keep its fieldworkers in the occupied territories and to continue its work here the organization needs your help. Send contributions to 4753 North Broadway, Suite 930, Chicago IL 60640 or call (312) 271-4492.

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BELTWAY BANDITS.

DAVID CORN

■ Liar's Poker

History seldom supplies quick judgments. But it did so on January 16, the day President Bush ordered airstrikes against Iraq and its forces occupying Kuwait. The war came four days after Congress ended its debate on whether to let Bush unleash the military. Through those preceding days, the arguments fell into three camps: Give sanctions a chance; send in the troops to pry Saddam Hussein out of Kuwait and defang him; or achieve a peaceful resolution by threatening war. The first two of those can be held honestly; the third belongs to scoundrels and is the only approach that already has been proved wrong. A review of the debate shows that about 110 members of the House of Representatives, explaining their support for the Solarz-Michel measure that handed Bush the military option, argued that providing the President with a club offered the only chance for peace.

Republicans embraced such "reasoning" to sound less hawkish. "I believe very strongly that perhaps our last hope to avoid war is the immediate threat of war," E. Clay Shaw Jr. trumpeted. John Boehner said he would vote for Solarz-Michel "not because I think that actual force will in the end drive Hussein from Kuwait—but because I believe the real threat of force will make him abandon his aggression." William Broomfield exalted the resolution as "the bargaining chip [Bush] needs to seek peace." Clarence Miller said voting for war was "the only way we can . . . achieve our objectives without going to war." Don Sundquist laid it on thick: "I'm for diplomacy. Diplomacy will continue. January 15 is not D-day. We are not going to abandon our efforts to resolve the crisis peacefully. But our diplomacy will carry more weight if Saddam understands that we are prepared to back up our words with deeds."

That logic was hardly the exclusive property of the G.O.P. The Democrats' Dan Rostenkowski hailed Bush as "a diplomat who has learned that warfare is a last resort" and voted to let him wage war, saying "my vote today is not a vote for war." Likewise liberal Mel Levine, who argued, "If we really want sanctions to work, if we want a real chance to avoid conflict, Congress must . . . pass the Solarz-Michel amendment."

Solarz-Michel, of course, passed, with eighty-six Democrats providing the margin of victory. At least thirty-eight of those, including Stephen Solarz, declared their vote was a vote for peace. And a similar measure won with a narrow majority in the Senate. Bush paid back their trust by invading Iraq at the earliest opportunity after the U.N. deadline had expired. Any member of Congress who voted for the use-of-force measures thinking that Bush would not hastily employ that option was suckered. And it gets worse. According to a House leadership aide, Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney had warned members of the House that they shouldn't vote for Solarz-Michel if they believed it was just for show.

"I have never bought the old clichés that the only way to avoid war is to be willing to wage it or that a big bloody stick is the best weapon in diplomacy," Richard Lehman, a California Democrat, said on the House floor. He supported Solarz-Michel and publicly accepted responsibility for taking the United States into war. Those who could not find the guts to do the same but still voted for war can now cloak their cowardice with a flag and a public opinion poll. As for the members who truly believed it was wrong to go to war but either were afraid to challenge the President or fancied themselves sophisticated gamesmen and gameswomen, they can save their excuses for posterity.

■ The Answer Is a Finger in the Wind

The Solarz-Michel saps are in good company. After the war began, many a fine legislator who days earlier had earnestly spoken out against going to war joined the herd in both the House and Senate by voting for a resolution that expressed support for the troops in the Middle East—a fine sentiment—but that also commended Bush's "efforts and leadership" in the Persian Gulf. That is, they praised the very actions they had previously opposed. In the House, only eleven members who had voted against going to war said nay to the commending resolution or abstained. In the Senate, where the resolution originated due largely to the insecurities of previously antiwar, moderate and conservative Democrats who now desired cover, no one dared oppose it.

In the early days of the war, most of the prewar opponents ran for their sealed rooms. One member of a liberal Democratic senator's staff made calls to the offices of like-minded senators, hoping to find some support for an effort to develop a critical position. No one was interested. Legislators who were against the war were hunkered down, saying nothing and trying to figure out how to express a view without committing what they feared would be political suicide. "They are anguishing, hoping for a quick end," says an aide to one silent House liberal. What they are really doing is waiting for body bags.

■ Appeasement-Before-Profits Republicans

It took the Republican Party just days to turn the war into political fodder. In a fundraising letter for the G.O.P., Senator Phil Gramm accused "appeasement-before-country liberals" of being disloyal Americans. Agriculture Secretary Clayton Yeutter, chair-elect of the G.O.P., declared his party would make the initial Democratic opposition to war "a very significant factor in the 1992 elections." But Yeutter ought to recall how leading Republicans voted on July 27—five days before Iraq's invasion of Kuwait—on a farm bill amendment. Both the House and the Senate that day passed similar measures to cut off financial credits to Iraq because of its violations of human rights. But Republicans in both chambers led efforts to gut the sanctions by allowing the Agriculture Secretary to waive the restrictions if he found they would harm U.S. agricultural interests more than Iraq. This move succeeded in the House, where G.O.P. leader Bob Michel and minority whip Newt Gingrich supported it, but failed in the Senate, where its champion was none other than Phil Gramm. Gramm and the other Republicans who voted with him don't mind standing up to Saddam, as long as the only thing at risk is lives.

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WATCHING RIGHTS.

ARYEH NEIER

As many have noted, the timing of Soviet troop movements into the Baltics, and their deadly assaults in Vilnius and Riga, resembled the October 1956 invasion of Hungary when world attention was also riveted by a Middle Eastern war, in that case for control of the Suez Canal. Nikita Khrushchev chose that moment to send troops to crush the government of Prime Minister Imre Nagy, which had broken from Moscow and proclaimed its neutrality. What has been less widely pointed out, however, is that many governments are now adept at taking actions that might elicit strong international condemnation if not for the diversionary effect of great events.

In some cases, as with the near round-the-clock curfews that have been imposed throughout the Israeli-occupied territories since the outbreak of the war, such actions are connected to the war in the gulf. Although the territories have remained calm thus far, the curfews were imposed, according to the Israeli authorities, as a preventive measure to control outbreaks of violence that might be provoked by the war. The result has been great hardship: food shortages, enforced idleness, loss of income, no schooling and an end to all but emergency medical care. Much of this has gone unreported, both because world attention toward Israel is focused on Iraq's missile attacks and because journalists have been barred from entering the West Bank and Gaza except under military escort.

Elsewhere, as in China, the government is simply exploiting the moment to do its dirty work while hardly anyone is paying attention. Having failed to comply with their own laws, which required that the trials of those arrested in the summer of 1989 for their part in the Tiananmen Square democracy movement begin within five and a half months, the authorities in Beijing waited another year to find an opportune time to stage these trials. In late 1990, just as the United Nations was fixing the January 15 deadline for Iraq to leave Kuwait, the Chinese government brought formal charges against many of the best-known participants in the democracy movement. At the time, the Bush Administration was particularly eager to avoid denouncing the charges for fear that China, offended, might exercise its power to veto the Security Council resolution. Right after the new year, as the prospect of war in the Persian Gulf was crowding out most other world news, the trials got under way behind closed doors. The first convictions, nine of them, were announced on January 5. Four of the student leaders in the dock were sentenced to two to four years' imprisonment. In the brief press accounts I heard and saw, those were characterized as "lenient" or "relatively light" sentences. More severe punishment was clearly in store, however, for some of those the Chinese government had labeled the "black hands" of the "counterrevolutionary movement," who were scheduled to go on trial right after January 15.

One of those whose sentence has just been announced is Ren Wanding, now 46. He is to serve seven years in prison. An accountant, he had been a leading participant in the Democracy Wall Movement of 1978-79 and was the founder of the China Human Rights League, the first such organization to be set up in China subsequent to the establishment of the Communist state. Ren launched the league on January 1, 1979, by posting a "Nineteen-Point Manifesto for Human Rights" on the Democracy Wall in central Beijing. For that, and for his refusal to write an acceptable self-criticism—instead he used a supply of toilet paper in his cell to write a two-volume denunciation of the government—Ren served four years in prison. In 1988, on the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Democracy Wall Movement, he published an article in *The New York Times* calling on students in China to speak out for Wei Jingsheng and others from the Democracy Wall period who were still imprisoned for peaceful expression. Ren was one of the few who had been active in that earlier democracy movement who also participated in the 1989 uprising. He was a frequent speaker on human rights to the students gathered in the square. Following the June 3-4 crackdown, he sought refuge in the U.S. Embassy in Beijing but was turned away. A few days later he was arrested.

Although the Bush Administration has not publicly condemned the charges against Ren Wanding and the others being tried, it did send the Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights, Richard Schifter, on a mission to Beijing in December. Schifter let it be known that he brought along a list of 150 political prisoners whose release the Administration sought. When asked by the press to make the list public, however, Schifter refused. This diminished the value of the effort, since it is the recognition of individual victims of oppression and the support such recognition arouses that have proved crucial in many other countries in generating the pressure to make governments free political prisoners.

By way of explanation, the State Department says that releasing the Schifter list might increase the dangers to political prisoners who were not named (lists compiled by Asia Watch and Amnesty International include more than 800 names, and those lists probably account for only a fraction of the total still imprisoned for their part in the democracy movement). This is not a persuasive argument, as the Chinese authorities have the list and can readily see who was left off by the State Department. The more plausible explanation is that disclosing the names would make it possible to monitor Chinese responsiveness. In effect, a public list would become an index of Chinese willingness to listen to U.S. pleas to respect human rights. No doubt, the Chinese do not want to be held accountable in this way, and the Bush Administration has obliged by denying those concerned with human rights this opportunity to measure China's performance.

At this writing, little is known about the number of victims that the gulf war will claim. Whatever the number of direct casualties, it should probably be swelled by the addition of Ren Wanding and the others whose trials were sneaked by, and whose names are never invoked publicly by President Bush or the members of his Administration.

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ARTICLES.

RETALIATION SCENARIOS

Israel and The Bomb

YAACOV TYGIEL

Whether or not it will maintain its current course following seven Iraqi Scud missile attacks, Israel is to be commended for its restraint. As long as the country holds back from a violent response, Saddam Hussein's efforts to break up the American-led coalition and turn the conflict into an Arab "holy war" will be foiled. Despite heavy damage to property, so far the Iraqi missiles have exacted a relatively low cost in human life. As of this writing, Iraqi attacks have resulted in two deaths directly caused by Scud missiles; twelve others resulted from heart failures or accidental asphyxiation from gas masks, and more than 200 people have been injured.

Israel's forbearance can be explained in part by the speedy American delivery of antiballistic Patriot missiles, accompanied by U.S. crews, which backed up some of the warmest words toward Israel heard from the White House in years. Furthermore, there was almost nothing the Israelis could do that the Americans and their allies, bombing Iraq around the clock, were not already doing. And according to the *Los Angeles Times* for January 22, the Americans refused to provide Israel's air force with the codes necessary to avoid hostile encounters with allied aircraft operating in Iraqi airspace, causing Israel to hesitate before taking a step that could result in a confrontation with its allies' pilots.

But in spite of Israel's remarkable restraint so far, the danger remains that it might still be drawn into the war. Israel consistently maintains its right to retaliate. On January 21, after he met with U.S. Under Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir declared that Israel will respond "at a suitable time." A day earlier CNN Pentagon correspondent Wolf Blitzer—who used to write for several Israeli newspapers under the names Ze'ev Barak ("Wolf Lightning") and Ze'ev Blitzer—quoted unnamed Israeli intelligence sources as saying that the Iraqis still possess as many as 100 mobile Scud missile launchers. According to Bob Woodward's January 28 report in *The Washington Post*, "About 50 Iraqi air force planes are confirmed destroyed, and 40 have escaped to Iran; some 700 planes remain." Faithfully following the Soviet training they received for more than twenty years, the Iraqis are apparently preserving their air power for a counteroffensive. Saddam's fliers may yet surprise the U.S.-led coalition and attack using their low-flying Sukhoi-24 fighter-bombers or the more primitive, rugged Sukhoi-7s. Although Saddam told CNN's Peter Arnett on January 29 that "we have maintained our balance using only conventional weapons," he insisted that Iraq still has "nuclear, chemical and biological capabilities." Later that day Col. Ra'anan Gissin, an Israeli Army spokesperson, stated that Israel expects the next attacks to include chemical weapons.

With all of the reportage and commentary of the past week on the Iraqi-Israeli confrontation and the likelihood of an Israeli strike, one serious and terrifying possibility has gone virtually unexamined: If Saddam succeeds in effectively hitting Israel with chemical weapons, Israel may respond with a nuclear attack. In fact, Israel may now be closer to pushing the button than any country has been since the Cuban missile crisis.

Before you assume this is a crazy idea, consider the following: For twenty-five years, Israel has followed a policy of "ambiguous deterrence," neither confirming nor denying news media and intelligence reports of the country's nuclear capability. Instead, when asked about it, Israeli spokespersons would always say that Israel would "not be the first to *introduce* nuclear weapons to the region." [Emphasis added.] But in a little-noticed speech to the Trade and Industry Club in Tel Aviv that was reported in the January 4 *Ha'aretz*, Lieut. Gen. Dan Shomron, the Israeli Army's Chief of Staff, told the audience that "Israel would not be the first to *use* nuclear weapons." [Emphasis in original.] And on January 15, ABC's Chris Wallace had the following conversation (broadcast January 17) with Brig. Gen. Avihu Bin-Nun, Commander of the Israeli Air Force:

> Bin-Nun: Would they really decide to send a nonconventional missile on the population of Israel? My own opinion [is] that that's very, very unlikely.
> Wallace: Because?
> Bin-Nun: Even if Saddam Hussein is crazy, he's still not going to [commit] suicide.
> Wallace: And would it be suicide if he were to use chemical weapons against Israel?
> Bin-Nun: He should think that he's going to [commit] suicide, I believe.
> Wallace: There has been talk that if he uses chemical weapons he might face nuclear counterresponse.
> Bin-Nun: Maybe.
> Wallace: Maybe?
> Bin-Nun: Maybe that's what he should think about.

Shomron and Bin-Nun implicitly confirm that the weapons are available; the only question is the timing of their use.

Earlier statements by Shamir indicate what that timing might be. Since the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait on August 2, 1990, Shamir has countered Saddam's chemical-warfare threats with threats to deliver a "terrible blow" to Baghdad. In late December he promised that "whoever will dare to attack us will be attacked seven times over." Over the past few months, expert Israeli journalists like Ze'ev Schiff, Dan Margalit, A. Schweitzer and Uzi Benziman have written openly of their understanding that this means Shamir is threatening to use Israel's nuclear weapons. According to Schiff, Shamir

Yaacov Tygiel, an Israeli who is a research associate at the Nuclear Age History and Humanities Center at Tufts University, is writing a book on the Israeli nuclear program. He hopes events prove him wrong.

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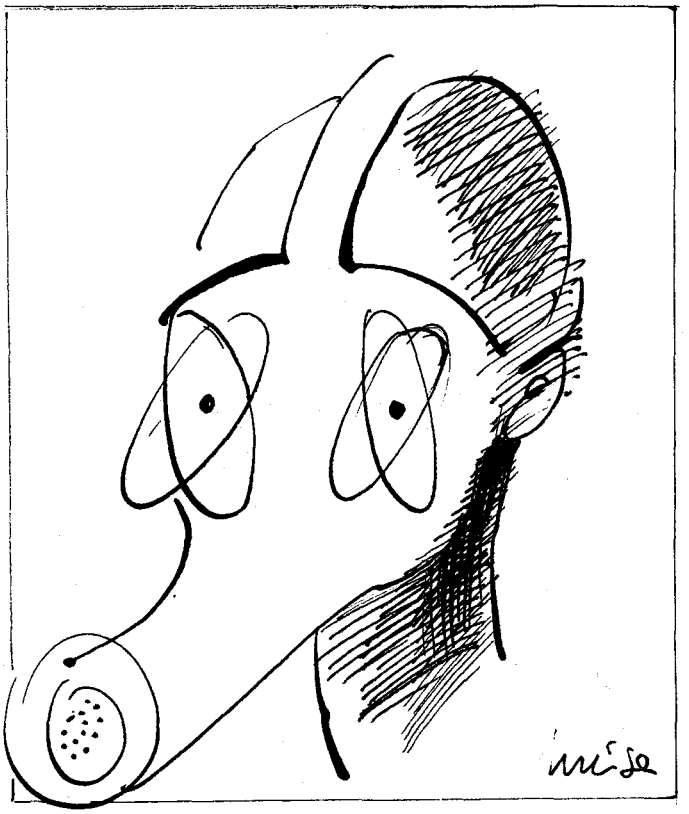
has indicated that an Israeli strike would be massive and immediate.

It could be that the Israeli threats are only rhetoric, aimed primarily at calming domestic anxieties. One cannot overestimate the fear and outrage Saddam's chemical-weapons threats evoke in Jewish Israelis. They believe that their state was established to assure that never again will anyone be able to poison helpless Jews. The idea of a barrage of missiles carrying poisonous gases hitting civilian population centers reminds Israelis that gas was among the major means the Nazis used to kill 6 million Jews—one-third of the Jewish people. Threats of a nuclear strike against Iraq assure Israelis that they are not helpless.

Or, Israel's leaders may have concluded that Saddam had failed to understand "ambiguous deterrence," and to insure that he would be deterred, they are now explicitly spelling out the price he will have to pay for a chemical attack. Also, it's possible that Israel's prewar saber rattling was designed to insure that the Americans would not accept a diplomatic solution to the crisis that would have left Israel to face Iraq's unconventional weapons arsenal alone. Certainly, once hostilities began, U.S. fears that Israel's response to Iraq's attacks might jeopardize the coalition inspired the Americans to shoulder the responsibility for Israel's defense.

However, the view that the Israeli bravado is just characteristic Middle Eastern brinkmanship may be too optimistic. The question remains: Is an Israeli nuclear strike in response to an Iraqi chemical-weapons attack a plausible scenario?

No Israeli government can entrust Israel's defense to a foreign government for long. That is not exclusively a matter of national pride. A government that cannot provide its people with a minimum of security and that has to rely on foreigners may lose its legitimacy, especially a right-wing government whose leaders are ardent believers in the utility of force. Israel bases its defense on a strategy of deterrence. In the view of hard-liners at the core of Shamir's government, Israel's ability to deter its enemies depends on the credibility of its threats. They may worry that reliance on the United States could convince the Arabs that Israel has lost its resolve. But Israel cannot afford the slightest doubt concerning its determination to act on its threats. That issue alone may determine Israel's decision. The country's size and demography limit its ability to absorb casualties and losses. So according to Israeli strategic thinking, "a quid pro quo is not enough; Israel must exact twice the price—or more—for every attack," writes Schiff in *A History of the Israeli Army*. Indeed, the weekend before the January 15 deadline, Ehud Olmert, Minister of Health and a close associate of Shamir, declared that Iraq would suffer "a hundredfold" the losses it might inflict on Israel. Of course, one way of doing that might be through a conventional airstrike or through the use of Israel's chemical arsenal. But what can better fit that formula than nuclear weapons in response to chemical weapons?



ILLUSTRATIONS BY MONICA INCISA

The social and economic toll of a prolonged conflict is another factor that weighs heavily on Israeli policy-makers. The present crisis does not yet require a mobilization of the whole nation. Nevertheless, the threat of chemical attack has caused an almost total paralysis of the economy. Israel won't be able to withstand it for long even if the United States showers Israel with billions in new aid. Whereas the Americans intend to take their time and "soften" the Iraqis in an air war that Pentagon sources say will probably continue into February, Israel may soon be tempted to take measures intended to decide the outcome of the war much more quickly.

Israeli public opinion won't be much of a constraint on Shamir and his circle when and if the decision whether or not to nuke Iraq comes up. Many Israeli Jews view themselves as the victims of evil, never as victimizers. History convinced them that, in the words of an Israeli pop hit from the 1970s, "The Whole World Is Against Us." The latest manifestation of that axiom is the unprovoked Iraqi attacks on the Jewish state. Furthermore, the Israeli public is nuclear-ignorant. With the exception of a few academics and journalists, Israelis would rather not think about atomic weapons. For Jews "gas" is the key word, not "atom." In 1946, when Americans were reading John Hersey's *Hiroshima* and learning the magnitude of the horrors they had introduced to the world, Israelis were learning about the magnitude of their people's extermination by gas, among other means. Finally, the demonization of Saddam as a Hitler-sized monster who is conspiring to once again use gas on Jews legitimizes the use of any weapon against him. Unfortunately, so far no U.S. leader has publicly rebuked Israel for its stepped-up nuclear rhetoric.

All this leads to the conclusion that the possibility of the use of nuclear weapons in the war against Iraq cannot be ruled out. Of course, there are practical arguments against using nuclear weapons, including the realization that fallout from any bombing could drift back over Israel—the "Chernobyl effect." Shamir's moderation so far indicates that these concerns are appreciated even by the extreme right-wingers in his Cabinet. With Western assistance Israel may prosper. But

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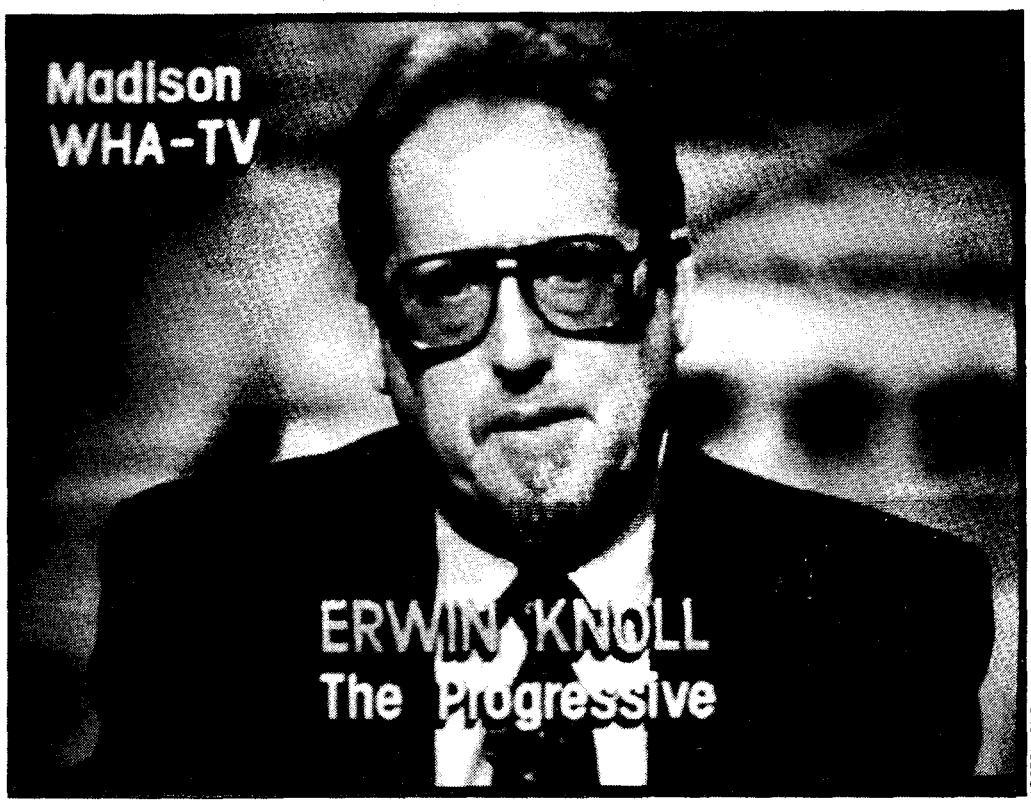

Erwin Knoll, the Editor of *The Progressive* magazine, has appeared on the MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour several times in recent months to give rare—and eloquent—pleas for peace in the Persian Gulf. Alone among the editors on the panels, Knoll has denounced George Bush's belligerent actions and appealed to Americans to resist Washington's warmaking.

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without it the country faces a bleak future. An Israel that has used the bomb will be in no position to ask for financial assistance from any Western country. It will rank with the most evil societies in history. Its chances of being accepted by its neighbors will be nil.

No conceivable interest is served by the apparent willingness of the media and their assortment of "expert" commentators to ignore this worrisome issue. Israeli security planners should be pressed to replace their mistaken belief in deterrence based on calculated nuclear threats with a more stable defense posture coupled with an imaginative peace initiative. Likewise, the United States and Britain should make clear the purpose of the several hundred nuclear weapons they have deployed in the Persian Gulf region. Whatever happens in the next weeks and months, the gulf crisis and the possibility of further Iraqi-Israeli confrontation starkly reveal the dangers of *any* nation possessing nuclear weapons in the volatile Middle East and the pressing need for a comprehensive disarmament agreement that will guarantee the security of every state and eliminate *all* nuclear weapons. □

MILITARY RESISTERS

Hell for Those Who Won't Go

BRUCE SHAPIRO

On January 2, handcuffed and in shock, Sgt. Derrick Jones was led under guard onto an airplane near his Army post in Friedberg, Germany. As the airplane's other occupants prepared for the flight to Saudi Arabia, Jones, a 26-year-old medic from North Dakota, sat silently, manacled arms above his head, rocking gently back and forth in a stunned and desperate trance while a superior officer repeatedly demanded Jones's assent to Persian Gulf duty. Derrick had not been permitted to say farewell to his wife, Karen, or their 18-month-old daughter. But later, on the flight, he wrote Karen a letter. If anything happens, he wrote, "demand an autopsy, because I will never take my own life."

In early November, Sergeant Jones, a lifelong member of the Assemblies of God, had requested a discharge from the Army as a conscientious objector on religious grounds. Although Jones filed his C.O. claim in the encroaching shadow of the gulf conflict, he'd begun considering the step many months earlier, during the U.S. invasion of Panama. At the time, Karen and Derrick Jones were stationed at Fort Sam Houston in San Antonio, where Derrick treated the wounded from Operation Just Cause. "That was when he first realized he couldn't continue," says Karen, who has remained in Germany. "He started feeling there was no way he could patch kids up just to have them sent out to be killed." As war in the gulf approached, Jones was transferred to Germany. He knew he had to make a decision, so he filed his C.O. claim. On November 18, as the first step in processing the claim, he was interviewed by a military chaplain. Jones explained that he couldn't kill enemy soldiers because he felt that to do so would mean, in terms of his faith, an assault on the body of Christ. "Don't worry," replied the chaplain. "None of them will be Christians."

Convinced by such conversations that the military would deny his claim, Jones went AWOL in Germany on November 26. Not wanting to consider himself a deserter, he contacted an attorney and began negotiations with his base commander. The commander, in conversations tape-recorded by Karen and the attorney, promised that if Jones turned himself in he would not be shipped out to Saudi Arabia. His C.O. claim would be processed in Germany, along with any disciplinary action for going AWOL. "There comes a time," Jones wrote Karen from hiding, "that you have to stand up for what you believe," even if it meant military prison. So on January 2, Jones presented himself at Friedberg. But in direct contradiction of the agreement, a bewildered Sergeant Jones was immediately handcuffed, put under guard and placed on a bus for the airfield. He was flown to Saudi Arabia at 9 P.M.

Amid the many stories buried by military censors in the early weeks of the war, news of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of military resisters is buried most deeply. Officially, the Pentagon lists 210 C.O. claims for all of 1990. But the military refuses to release precise figures for the five months of Operation Desert Shield and lists no numbers at all for 1991. However, military counseling agencies such as the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors (C.C.C.O.) and the War Resisters League report that their phones are ringing off the hook with calls from troops seeking advice. Military counselors estimate that around the country at least 1,000 reservists and active-duty troops are restricted in varying degrees to their bases for refusing orders to ship out to the gulf.

Whatever the exact number, resistance to the war within the ranks of the military is a widespread and often stirring spectacle. On November 21, a battalion of Marine recruits at Camp Pendleton in California was training on the rifle range when one private laid down his rifle and informed his gunnery sergeant that he would not continue preparing for a war he opposed (the Marine Corps won't release his name, but the story has been confirmed in depositions and eyewitness accounts). The angry sergeant paraded the recruit before his entire company, dressing him down and ridiculing him as a coward. When the sergeant was done, he turned to the company and sardonically asked if anyone else would refuse to fight. Much to his astonishment, nine other Marine recruits stepped out of the ranks. Two months later, seven are still in the brig, awaiting court-martial on charges of refusing training. They've dubbed themselves "the Magnificent Seven." At Camp Lejeune in North Carolina, fourteen Marine reservists await court-martial for refusing gulf orders, even while their C.O. claims are pending. At Fort Reilly in Kansas, a physician in the Army Reserve, Capt. Yolanda Huet-Vaughn, publicly abandoned her post on December 31 rather than "be an accomplice in what I consider an immoral, inhumane and un-

Bruce Shapiro, a contributor to Building Bridges: The Emerging Grassroots Coalition of Labor and Community *(Monthly Review Press), is writing a book on political repression.*

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constitutional act." In Germany, television news programs run interviews with U.S. soldiers in hiding.

Some reservists and active-duty personnel, like Huet-Vaughn and Jeff Paterson, a marine who refused to board a Saudi Arabia–bound plane in Hawaii, have spoken out at the largest antiwar rallies and on the talk-show circuit. Many more, like a young reservist who stood up at a recent antiwar meeting in New Haven to announce that he'd refuse any order sending him to the gulf ("I'm willing to fight for my country, but my country isn't at stake in Kuwait"), are simply taking a stand within their own units, families and communities.

The sheer volume of active-duty and reserve troops refusing, in one way or another, to serve in the gulf stands in dramatic contrast to the early years of Vietnam. "For the first two years after Tonkin, there was nothing like this," says Tod Ensign, who served in Vietnam in those years and who is now director of Citizen Soldier, an antiwar and military-counseling organization. "We were very isolated, and the peace movement did nothing to reach out to us." The handful of troops openly refusing service in the first years of the war were young draftees with backgrounds in radical politics. The first stirrings of broader defiance weren't visible until 1967, when disillusioned veterans began making their opposition to the war public and when an Army doctor, Capt. Howard Levy, faced a much-publicized court-martial for refusing to train Green Beret medical officers.

Perhaps the most palpable echo of Vietnam is heard in the voices of military doctors and medical reservists who, like Dr. Levy a quarter-century ago, find the war incompatible with their medical responsibilities. Dr. Huet-Vaughn, a 39-year-old mother of three who had joined the Reserves as a medical student and went on to a career in public health, even contacted Levy in New York as she pondered her own decision to defy orders rather than file for C.O. status. "The point is that the policy is bankrupt, not that I personally should be exempt from the war," she explains. Huet-Vaughn planned to return to Fort Reilly and face disciplinary charges in late January.

Military counselors and veterans whose experience spans both eras attribute the palpable resistance in the ranks to changes brought on by the all-volunteer Army. Hundreds of thousands of reservists, with one foot in civilian society, reflect the same doubts indicated in polls prior to January 15, which showed that half of all Americans opposed going to war. Many of today's recruits are themselves the children of Vietnam veterans, with firsthand experience of that war's devastating toll on its survivors. The allurements intended to shape an all-volunteer Army—higher salaries, college tuition programs and broader enlistment of women—have brought a flood of recruits for whom the military represents the only ticket away from poverty or a career at McDonald's. Although they are more than willing to fight for their country, their volunteer status also means that many soldiers want to judge the cause they're being asked to die for. In the case of the gulf, it's clear to many troops that by anyone's accounting America's security or survival is simply not at stake. They are not necessarily likely to file as C.O.s (C.O. status has always been primarily a white, middle-class phenomenon, about which little information is available to active troops, and many sol-

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diers cannot meet the strict religious and ethical test for C.O. status), but such recruits, say counselors and resisters, are considering their stake in the gulf war carefully. "A lot of people don't want to go," says Karen Jones from her home in Germany. "But people are afraid, so usually they are not saying anything."

Then, too, the military Reserves have changed. Once a middle-class refuge for individuals desiring the benefits of military affiliation without the threat of actual combat, today the Reserves are diverse battalions closely integrated with active units. On the one hand, that means reservists are now likely to be called up for combat duty. On the other, it means that the Reserves reflect all the economic and racial disillusionment of the street. Can African-American reservists find more at stake in the gulf than the majority of black Americans, who continue to oppose the war?

Another important difference lies in the peace movement itself. Within a few days after January 15, antiwar activists' vocal support for the troops was almost a cliché—"We support our troops, we hate your war," protesters chanted. For months, activists have stood outside military bases handing out leaflets on conscientious objection and other alternatives. At Camp Lejeune, possession of such pamphlets could bring harassment or punishment, so activists now stand outside the gate with a banner simply bearing the telephone number of a local counseling agency, which recruits can memorize as they pass by. On January 12, San Francisco's Board of Supervisors passed a resolution declaring the city a "sanctuary" for military resisters, prohibiting the use of city funds or personnel to enforce military enlistment policies.

Nowhere is support for troops who resist the war more dramatic than in Germany, the staging area for many American units heading to the gulf. In late summer, the German Green Party called on U.S. troops to go AWOL. Take a "Winter Vacation," the Greens said, offering to shelter any soldiers who refuse gulf service. The campaign soon spread beyond the Greens. In Bremen and Berlin, public advertising campaigns featured prominent citizens offering to house U.S. soldiers who leave their units. In December the German television program *Monitor* interviewed a series of TV and movie stars and other celebrities, all of whom said that of course they would shelter any G.I. who came to their door.

According to Andre Stoner of the Military Counseling Network in Kastellaun, near Friedberg, "There is now a fairly effective network" of clergy and peace activists operating safe houses in Germany. Stoner, who provided counseling and support for Derrick Jones, has personal knowledge of about twenty-five AWOL soldiers in hiding with Germans. Such troops are well aware of the harsh penalties if they're caught, says Stoner—ranging from loss in rank to years in the brig. What's more, he says, troubled soldiers in Germany are often turning to fellow troops for support; several times a week he is approached by groups of soldiers as well as individuals seeking assistance. Since December, Stoner's small office has received 450 requests for assistance from U.S. soldiers. About fifty finally filed C.O. claims. The demand became so heavy over Christmas that additional volunteers were dispatched from the States.

Whether or not such resistance can be considered a movement, it's a phenomenon the military brass is seeking aggressively to squelch. The fourteen marines at Camp Lejeune anticipate charges ranging from dereliction of duty to missing troop movements. Five of the fourteen—from the same base in the Bronx—may face additional and extraordinary charges of conspiracy. All fourteen could face penalties of up to seven years in prison. David Stoller, a counselor with C.C.C.O. in Philadelphia, tells of a woman (who will remain anonymous at her own request because of fear of retribution) who filed her C.O. claim long before her unit went on alert, which is supposedly a precondition for approval. When her claim was turned down, she refused service; her court-martial was on January 28. "I've talked to many people in a position like hers," says Stoller. In Germany, counseling agencies know of several soldiers seeking C.O. status who have, like Jones, been shackled and hustled off to Saudi Arabia. A friend of Derrick and Karen Jones in Friedberg, Brian Spencer, had filed his own C.O. claim. He was flown out to Saudi Arabia in shackles and leg irons the same night as Jones.

Tod Ensign of Citizen Soldier sees the Pentagon's fear of troop defections behind several highly publicized strategic decisions, including the nonrotation of troops stationed in Saudi Arabia. In Vietnam, he points out, rotations away from the front lines or to the States gave thousands an opportunity to "vote with their feet." "It's very hard to vote with your feet if there's no rotation," he says.

The current level of resistance in the ranks is an important political development. At a minimum, such resistance suggests that the troops, like the American public at large, will prove reluctant to support a long ground war. More broadly, resistance within the military may turn out to be the most predictable—and therefore most powerful—element in the anti-

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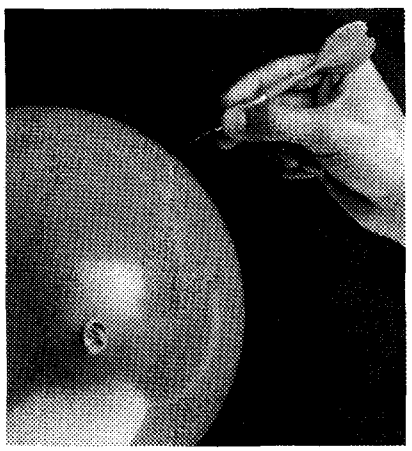

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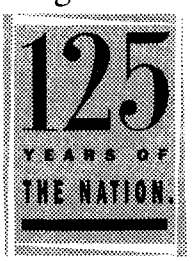

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war movement. Citizens' peace demonstrations on the streets of America may be contained and rad-baited in the news media. Discontent on the front lines of the war and in the military bases of America could be far more disruptive of the war effort. It revives memories of Vietnam veterans angrily hurling their medals at the Capitol. Even more ominous, doubts about the war in today's armed forces recall the final, desperate expression of disillusionment in Vietnam, fragging—the battlefield assassination of unpopular U.S. officers by their own troops.

The stories of today's military resisters also bring home the particular tyrannies of this war half a world away. On January 22, Karen Jones received a letter from Derrick in Saudi Arabia. The military claims to be processing his C.O. application, but he feels certain he'll soon face combat. "He's got two M.P.s guarding him wherever he goes," Karen recounts. "His guards keep telling him they know what he does is all an act." He is prohibited by military rules from disclosing his exact location. But he sent a description. "He says that where they have him, all around this base, there's a high barrier like the Berlin wall." □

LETTER FROM EUROPE

Gorbachev—Two Steps Backward?

DANIEL SINGER

"Comrade democrats—in the widest meaning of this word—you have scattered. The reformers have gone to ground. Dictatorship is coming. . . . No one knows what kind of dictatorship this will be, and who will come—what kind of dictator, and what the regime will be like." Thus Eduard Shevardnadze in his December 20, 1990, resignation speech.

The sixth year of Mikhail Gorbachev's *perestroika* is drawing to an end with all the signs of a drama reaching its climax. The Soviet economy is on the brink of disaster. Production is falling, the distribution system is collapsing, lines are lengthening and prices are ready to take off. In a context of political relaxation and *glasnost*, nationalism—exacerbated by economic discontent—has brought the Soviet Union to the point where it may break up altogether. Faced with the combined threat of economic debacle and dissolution of the union, Gorbachev decided toward the end of last year to streamline the government and strengthen his own position, preparing to take special powers in case of emergency. But his first attempt to assert central authority led to bloodshed in Vilnius and Riga and brought about a nationwide outcry. In the January 20 *Moscow News*, whose pages were edged in black, the list of protesters, from filmmaker Tengiz Abuladze to sociologist Tatyana Zaslavskaya, read like a roll-call of Gorbachev's former associates. More worrying still was the support of several of his former advisers for the hundreds of thousands of demonstrators who took to the streets in Moscow to express their indignation.

No wonder that some Western pundits are already advising their masters, with cynical candor, that once the Persian Gulf crisis is over Gorbachev will become dispensable, with Boris Yeltsin perhaps being a better bet for capitalist restoration in Russia. This is not the first time the experts have buried Gorbachev, and the obituaries may again prove premature. In any case, the main preoccupation of *Nation* readers is not to find out what is best for capital. I shall try instead to suggest what is at stake in the Soviet Union, what interests are involved and why the present struggle is so bitter and passionate.

It is hard to assess and predict the course of events in Europe, since what is taking place there is unprecedented. In Budapest, Prague and Warsaw—and now, with a time lag, in Moscow and Leningrad—we are seeing what might best be described, to paraphrase E.P. Thompson, as the remaking of a capitalist class. This is a lengthy process, and its final outcome is uncertain. But already it has altered the terms of the debate, gradually replacing talk of a socialist market economy with market *tout court* and now to the necessary change in property relations. This change will involve not just minor enterprises such as peasant farms, handicrafts or small family firms but also the huge plants and trusts that are now in the hands of the state. It is far from clear when and how these will be privatized, yet the issue is already on the agenda because what is at stake is a fundamental transformation of the regime, a shift from mainly political to more economic means for extracting the surplus from the working population. The huge economic and social reform will not only affect the lives of ordinary people. It will also reshape the power and privileges of those at the top.

The power of Russia's ruling class was always incomparably greater and yet at the same time more fragile than in the West. Our Rockefellers and Rothschilds, our Agnellis and Krupps, actually stay in power, with their economic strength and privilege intact, even if they are kicked out of office. The prerogatives of Soviet leaders, on the other hand, have always depended entirely on their holding on to political power. In the present transition, this problem goes well beyond a handful of Politburo members. It also affects a host of party apparatchiks at all levels, and, if less directly, even greater numbers of the *nomenklatura*, those whose national, republic-level or local jobs were considered important enough to require party approval. The fate of these millions of functionaries will be shaped by the ways in which economic management is reorganized, by the remaining influence wielded by the party in particular and by central authority in general, and by the manner in which property is distributed. This explains why they are now fighting for position with such bitterness.

Gorbachev did not come to power in 1985 with the idea that capitalism is the normal state of things and the Soviet system a historical accident. A product of the party, he rode to the top at the head of a faction determined to reform a system of management and rule that had obviously reached the end of its tether. It took the reformers a couple of years to decide that the solution lay in the market. Even then, they did not

Daniel Singer is The Nation*'s Europe correspondent.*

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grasp that the market has its own logic and that to function efficiently it must have a different set of rules, including different property relations. A further period of mismanagement in a hybrid system was then required for the full conversion to capitalism. By last autumn Gorbachev had given his blessing to the so-called 500-day plan of Stanislav Shatalin, whose broad lines were subsequently endorsed by the orthodox judges of the I.M.F. and the World Bank.

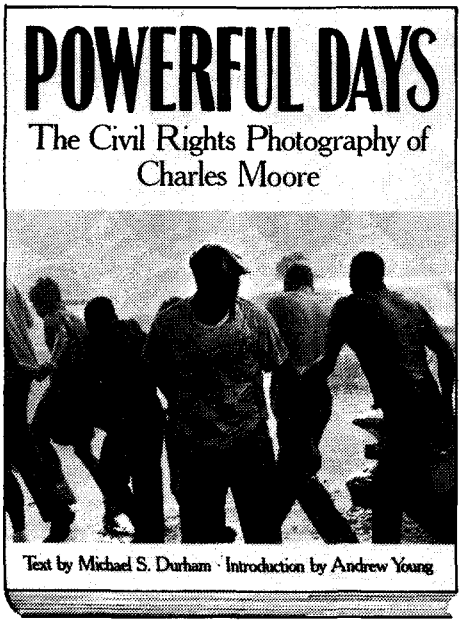
The present mess is not the direct product of the old system, whose impending bankruptcy merely forced Soviet leaders to seek a different course. Rather, it is the offspring of the new system or, more accurately, of the transition. The authorities allowed the old disciplines and old links between enterprises to lapse without providing any new ones to take their place. Monopolistic producers took advantage of the situation and raised prices and incomes. So much hot money is now floating around the country that without a monetary reform, attractive consumer goods will vanish as soon as they reach the shops. (The government's sudden withdrawal from circulation of high-denomination bank notes of 50 and 100 rubles is an attempt to mop up some of this money and also to hit the "shadow economy.") Both sides are being accused of having aggravated the situation on purpose: the reformers in order to prove that the process must be speeded up, and the conservatives to show that life was better under Brezhnev.

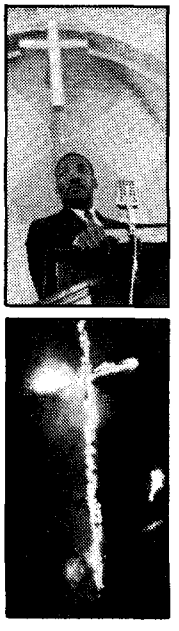
But there is no need to look for ideological motives; the mafia has reasons of its own. The black market flourishes. At the turn of the year in Moscow you could buy a Zhiguli, or Soviet Fiat, for 100,000 rubles, more than thirty times the average yearly salary. A bottle of Stolichnaya vodka cost nearly a week's wages. At the same time shortages, whether of cigarettes or toothpaste, persist, driving people up the wall. Last year, to epitomize the folly, a bumper crop was largely wasted because there were not enough people to harvest it—this in a country that spends nearly $10 billion a year on food imports!

All this led to hoarding, to barter, to parochialism and to a search for autarky at every level that has aggravated national conflicts. Some kind of national crisis was inevitable. In this multi-ethnic society, the Georgian tyrant, Stalin, had driven national feelings underground and kept them there with his iron fist. Those feelings gradually resurfaced after his death and were bound to find a powerful, occasionally jingoistic, expression in the new political climate of *glasnost*. But the bitter economic discontent, the growing shortages and the mood of free-for-all made the nationalist revival violent and disruptive, threatening the fabric of society and the very survival of the Soviet Union.

Gorbachev has tried to redress the balance by offering to grant the fifteen republics sovereignty, part of which they are supposed to transfer to the union in a treaty now under negotiation. But he is coming late to the negotiating table, with the Western Ukrainians as well as the Balts and the Georgians reluctant to play, and with few cards in his hand. The Communist Party has long ceased to be a unifying force; its ideology is not taken seriously. The only attraction Gorbachev has to offer is the prospect of a common all-union market. At this stage, however, it is not easy to convince the republics that divided they fall, let alone that united they stand. And it is very

"And let us move on in these powerful days, these days of challenge, to make America what it ought to be."—Martin Luther King, Jr.





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difficult to attract them with the offer of a market that is conspicuous only by its absence.

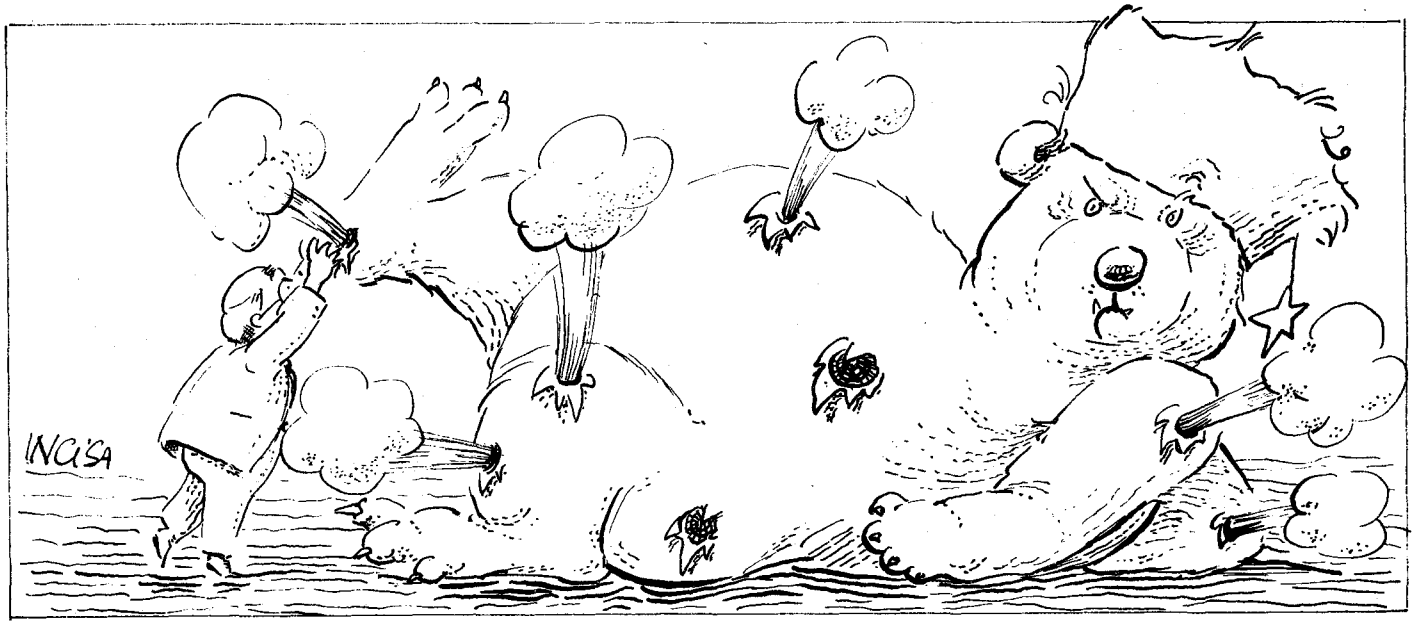
Thus everything brings us back to the economy and the social consequences of its crisis. Here, however, there is a mystery. By the second half of last year the die-hard defenders of the old economic system were plainly defeated and the "marketeers" had the upper hand. Admittedly, they may have differed on the pace and the means for reaching their shared goal of a "normal," not to say capitalist, economy. "Radicals" like Shatalin and Grigory Yavlinsky argued against half-measures, claiming that if one wanted the market one couldn't also promise full employment, but one did have to be aggressive in the defense of private property rights. More moderate marketeers, like Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov and his deputy, the economist Leonid Abalkin, warned that shock tactics *à la polonaise*, bringing a dramatic fall in living standards and a sharp rise in unemployment, would lead in the Soviet context to a social explosion. It could also be argued that Ryzhkov and his associates wanted the central government to play a more important role during the transition period. Be that as it may, the differences were not insuperable. For a time, Gorbachev himself expressed a preference for Shatalin's plan, and even when he finally produced a different text—his "guidelines for the stabilization of the economy and transition to a market economy"—this left all the doors open to further collaboration. What happened between October, when the mood was seemingly one of compromise, and December, when Shevardnadze used his resignation as a tocsin to warn of the danger of dictatorship, is still shrouded in secrecy.

While it is hard, then, to say what the battle is really about, it can be stated quite clearly what it is *not* about. It is not, as is usually described, a conflict between Gorbachev the dictator and Boris Yeltsin and his democratic libertarian supporters. Those intellectuals who stood behind Gorbachev in the heyday of *glasnost* and have now flocked to Yeltsin have long ceased to be great champions of democracy. Advocates of an economic policy that involves great social inequalities and unemployment, and that is therefore likely to be unpopular, they are more preoccupied with the problem of how to "save a country" from the inclinations of its inhabitants. Americans, who do not normally have access to the thoughts of the Russian "radicals," had an excellent sample last August in a piece in *The New York Review of Books* by one of the brightest of them, Moscow Mayor Gavril Popov, eloquently titled "Dangers of Democracy." (Popov has since developed his views in a book published in Moscow with a borrowed title: *What Is to Be Done?*)

Popov admits that the reform movement will meet increasing difficulties because it advocates "a society of economic inequality." He continues candidly: "The masses long for fairness and economic equality. And the further the process of transformation goes, the more acute and the more glaring will be the gap between those aspirations and economic realities." From this he draws a dual conclusion: "We must speed up changes in the forms of ownership. . . . we must seek new mechanisms and institutions of political power that will depend less on populism." Yeltsin, who is determined to defeat Gorbachev, needs popular support and cannot therefore speak with such candor. But if he should triumph, those who see him as a rampart against dictatorship may be in for a rude awakening.

To debunk the so-called "democrats"—also known as "radicals" or "leftists"—is by no means to whitewash Gorbachev. Whatever prior knowledge he may have had, his responsibility for the Baltic crackdown cannot be denied and his stubborn refusal so far to condemn either the paratroopers or those who ordered them to open fire is significant. There are also ominous signs that freedom of expression is being restricted, with the banning of three successive broadcasts of the popular TV current affairs program *Vzglyad* (*Outlook*) being only one of many dangerous examples.

What has happened to the man who launched *glasnost* and even spoke at one stage of restoring power to the soviets? To grasp his evolution, one must reflect on the limits of his "revolution from above." After an exhilarating start, Gorbachev abandoned his search for a third way between neo-Stalinism and capitalism. He rapidly gave up experiments with different forms of democracy, notably in the factories and offices.



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Surrounded by reformist apparatchiks and the *priviligentsia*, he failed to seek an alternative constituency among the working class. And so, when he was deserted by the marketeers, who felt he was not moving fast enough toward capitalism, he found himself alone facing a country that was disintegrating. As instruments of his power he could rely only on a party that he had badly shaken, an army he had deprived of an empire and a police whose powers he had tried to rein in. Is he still in charge or has he now become the prisoner of those forces?

Whatever the answer, the time has come for a change of the guard. The four men with whom he launched *perestroika* have all gone. Yegor Ligachev went first, at last year's party congress, when his conservative caution no longer seemed to be required. Others followed in quick succession: In Ryzhkov's case, a heart attack facilitated the separation; Shevardnadze left the stage spectacularly and Aleksandr Yakovlev on tiptoe. In the past Gorbachev has surprised the world by his ability to rebound, moving one step back and then two forward. Does he still have room to maneuver and the team to mount such a comeback? All that we can say for certain is that the making of a capitalist class is a tougher task than Western preachers and Eastern practitioners may have imagined. □

EDITORIALS.

(*Continued From Page 185*)
graver danger and a greater evil than do any of the plausible diplomatic agreements that might end it."

—Daniel Ellsberg at the rally in Washington, January 26

Uncertain Trumpet

Senator Howard Metzenbaum, 73, retains the energy and optimism of youth. He recently founded the Coalition for Democratic Values to rejuvenate the Democratic Party's traditions of economic justice and solidarity. He's been joined by sixty-five members of Congress, academics, unionists, women's groups and state and local party leaders. Groups of this sort have been heard from before. A small but brave troop assembles, listens to a fitful trumpet and departs in disappointment when the walls of our capitalistic Jericho remain upright.

On January 26, however, Metzenbaum himself was surprised. More than 500 people turned up at the coalition's first public meeting in Chantilly, Virginia. They heard Ron Brown and Edward Kennedy, Richard Gephardt and Paul Simon, Harvey Gantt and Hariett Woods. New Deal pieties were brought up to date by Kennedy in a plan for national health insurance. Gephardt advanced a program for investment in education, job training and social infrastructure. Gantt, speaking with pained authority, warned of the social divisiveness of racism.

The war cast a large pall on the day. With the exception of Jesse Jackson, the speakers tried to put it into parentheses. Brown did point out that soldiers will return to a society that does not now care much for the social groups from which they come. The war will indeed absorb the material resources needed for the worthy social programs proposed. It will also create a cultural and social atmosphere in which empty and ugly chauvinism will undermine the immensely difficult task of inviting American society to face the truth about its own defects and divisions. Neither the leaders who spoke nor the activists who listened had larger ideas on convincing the electorate that new social programs are needed. Only Gephardt's appeal had some ecumenical promise, since it responded to the everyday preoccupations of Americans across class and race lines.

The Democrats in the coalition, however, lack a larger project for a new economy and society. They still espouse the old additive politics, without a common denominator. They undermine the reforms they seek by presenting them as so many commodities to be traded on the political marketplace. The voters see no coherence to the program and so accept the Republican description of it as the work of "special interests." In addition, the coalition's leaders had no alternative to the Republicans' Pentagonized version of global politics. Until they develop a program that connects demands for domestic economic changes to new foreign policies, they will be helpless before the militarization of the public mind. The coalition's heart is in the right place. The tasks of new thinking lie before it.

NORMAN BIRNBAUM

BEAT THE DEVIL.

(*Continued From Page 188*)
and breath." So let us close with the words of Sir Peregrine Worsthorne, from *The Sunday Telegraph* for January 20:

> It is beginning to look as if Saddam Hussein has given the West a chance once again to establish its unchallengeable preeminence in a manner impregnable at once to moral obloquy and military resistance. Not only will our arms have prevailed in a most spectacular fashion. So also will our ideals. Nothing is ever forever. Sooner or later the Third World will throw up other challenges. But if the Gulf war ends as it has begun, there can be no doubt who are the masters now—at any rate for another generation. We have the laser beams and they have not. And the we who matter are not the Germans or the Japanese or the Russians but the Americans. Happy days are here again. Bliss it is in this dawn to be alive; but to be an old reactionary is very heaven.

As he was leaving Baghdad on the twelve-hour drive to the Jordanian border, my brother passed the central post office, half demolished by bombs. Its destruction had been held up as an example of the precision of the West's military technology. Looking at it from the point of view of an Iraqi, or an Arab, or a person in the Third World, my brother told me later, while he prepared to return to Baghdad on January 29 with a small group of journalists, that he was reminded of the general post office in Dublin, bombarded with great precision by the British in 1916 as they suppressed the Easter rising. To the British it was just another post office. . . . Thus had the West given Saddam Hussein his just war.

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Who Is to Be Blamed?

WILLIAM. G. ROSENBERG

THE RUSSIAN REVOLUTION. *By Richard Pipes. Knopf. 944 pp. $40.*

It is not surprising that the two most powerful questions of Russian political discourse have long been "Who is to blame?" and "What is to be done?" Confronted with the Herculean tasks of establishing control over one-sixth of the earth's surface, integrating a diverse array of socially and culturally embedded political systems and constantly resisting in the process competitive and frequently aggressive European and Asiatic neighbors, Russians have typically retreated behind simplifying and simplistic perspectives. "Westernization," "modernization," "democracy," "socialism" and even "authoritarianism," not to mention its "totalitarian" variant, have lost conceptual and analytic coherence in a context of almost perpetual stress, where for at least 100 years the sociopolitical order, in its various forms, has been continually out of joint with both internal and external pressures for change.

The task of scholarly understanding has been correspondingly daunting. The difficulties of accumulating and interpreting evidence have been compounded not simply by political dogmatism and morally charged modifiers like "bourgeois" and "totalitarian" but by the awful task of coming to grips with massive human suffering. What "progress" is to notions of Western development, "victimization" is to the Russian East, with corresponding effect on the types of questions historians have asked and sought to answer. This has particularly been the case with analyses of Russia's revolutions. Such centrally important aspects of revolutionary transformation as the relationship between structure and agency, the impact of culture, the locations and forms of power, the role of gender, the nature of collective behavior and the construction of popular meaning, among others, have been exceptionally difficult to delineate, much less explore. Even more familiar issues—like the cultural forms and consequences of repressive violence and the relationships between ideology, political organization and collective action—have been clouded.

Over the past fifteen years or so, however, beginning perhaps with Stephen Cohen's rich biography of Nikolai Bukharin, a generation of scholars has greatly expanded the field of inquiry. Superb monographs and a wide array of articles have appeared on workers and politics in 1905 and 1917, peasant culture and activism, political ideologies and parties, the intelligentsia, culture and even the social history of the army. This work has greatly enhanced understanding in part by recognizing that the question of who was to "blame" reduced historical complexities to distorting simplifications, however much these scholars, too, empathized with history's victims. To explore social contexts and their relation to the contours of change does not exculpate human behavior but situates it and thus makes it more comprehensible.

Pipes's conception of history is exceptionally politicized.

One of the distinguishing and disturbing features of Richard Pipes's extraordinarily angry volume—a massive and powerfully written book that is certain to shape popular understanding of Russia's revolution in the West as well as the Soviet Union for years to come—is that none of this literature matters. He finds little to learn by thinking beyond the question of culpability. Russia's revolution is a "catastrophe" made "by identifiable men pursuing their own advantage." According to Pipes, "The most fundamental ethical questions [are]: whether it is proper to destroy institutions built over centuries by trial and error, for the sake of ideal systems; whether one has the right to sacrifice the well-being and even the lives of one's own generation for the sake of generations yet unborn; whether man can be refashioned into a perfectly virtuous being." Pipes's conception of history is thus from the outset exceptionally politicized, although, to his credit, admittedly and openly so. His aim is to destroy once and for all the possibility that the Russian Revolution, the Bolsheviks or anything like "communism" can ever be thought of in any but the most condemnatory terms. With his remarkable intellectual range, crystalline style and capacity to muster an extraordinary mass of evidential detail, he is likely to be successful, especially in the Soviet Union. In its Russian-language version, *The Russian Revolution* will have a powerful and destabilizing impact, given the intensity of current feeling and a sociopolitical context in which the task of understanding revolutionary change has once again become a question of who is to blame.

Those most responsible for the catastrophe of revolution are Russia's radical intellectuals, even more so, perhaps, than their logical political offshoot, the Bolshevik party. Pipes sees the beginning of the Revolution in the February 1899 student protests, its end with Lenin's death in 1924. Its root cause was thus not insufferable conditions but irreconcilable attitudes and the intellectuals' lust for "remaking of the human species." Liberal and moderate socialist intellectuals, driven by careerist impulses and their own delusions of grandeur, were in the overall scope of things no less culpable. The liberals' efforts to do "all in their power to deprive the monarchy of effective authority" were largely responsible for Russia's failure to make an orderly transition to constitutionalism in 1905; their "irresponsible" and "dishonorable" behavior in 1915 and 1916 brought the "onset of a revolutionary psychosis." As for moderate socialists, "such people no one could risk following; they talked endlessly of revolution and democracy, but would not defend their ideals with anything other than words and gestures." This "inertia disguised as submission to the forces of history, this unwillingness to fight and win," is for Pipes best explained in psychological terms.

In 1917 itself, "under the hopelessly incompetent administration of liberal and socialist intellectuals events were bound to go from bad to worse," leaving Bolshevik fanatics a clear and easy route to power. Although a fearful man and a coward, and one whose "dominant political impulse was and remained hatred," Lenin controlled his followers not by principle but by will: "The Bolsheviks

William G. Rosenberg is professor of history at the University of Michigan.

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were bound together, not by what they believed, but in whom they believed."

> Like his pupils and emulators Mussolini and Hitler, Lenin won power by first breaking the spirit of those who stood in his way, persuading them that they were doomed. The Bolshevik triumph in October was accomplished nine-tenths psychologically: the forces involved were negligible, a few thousand men at most in a nation of one hundred and fifty million, and victory came almost without a shot being fired.

It was Trotsky's "supreme mastery of the modern coup d'état, of which he was arguably the inventor," however, that set the stage for a "type of government that was to breed numerous offspring in the form of left and right one-party dictatorships in Europe and the rest of the world." Lenin himself failed three times: in April, June and July, and thereafter preferred to "redesign the world" well guarded or in hiding.

Selective quotes in a book review are almost always distorting, but in the case of *The Russian Revolution* they obscure only the erudition and range of evidence Pipes brings to bear in his 842 pages of text, not his methodology or the core of his analysis. And it is this that makes his book such a troublesome one. Pipes's relentless desire to condemn overwhelms attention to important historical questions. He dismisses with contempt most recent scholarship as reflecting the same positivism and moral blindness that he believes captured the Russian intelligentsia, so he glosses over the complexities of change and the power and subtlety of human aspiration and behavior in all of its forms, not simply those of political fanatics.

This gets him into serious analytical trouble. One consequence of the disproportionate weight he assigns to the intelligentsia as the agent of chaos is confusion and error on the broader patterns of social action and popular culture. "Under the incitement of left-of-center intellectuals" in 1905-6, he argues, agrarian unrest "ended, once and for all, the peasantry's traditional pro-monarchic sentiments." There is no convincing evidence available about peasant attitudes in 1906, but if this is true, the monarchy's task of governing in the years before 1917 must be seen as problematic at best, its popular support thin, its claim to represent "Russia" ideologically anachronistic, with deep social conflict a likely prospect, especially in time of war. In this broader picture, intellectuals as agents of change reflect broad and powerful social currents regardless of their wish for power. Yet by 1917 we find that

> Russia without a true—that is, 'terrible' or 'awesome'—tsar, let alone without any tsar, in the people's minds was a contradiction in terms: for them it was the person of the tsar that defined and gave reality to the state, not the other way around. . . . The peasantry remained monarchist. Nevertheless, in early 1917 it was not averse to an interlude of anarchy.

If on the contrary *this* is true, the intellectuals' goal of modernizing the Russian state was flawed not by any lust for power but by the extraordinary task, in the face of the monarchy's dissolution, of accommodating a resistant mass political culture to any essentially democratic forms. Again, it is hard to see intellectual agency as the sole explanation for genuinely catastrophic and humanistically tragic upheaval.

Similar problems emerge in the way Pipes disengages Bolshevik political strength from the activism of Russian labor. He attributes to Bukharin, Lenin and especially Iurii Larin between

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1918 and 1920 the "unique historical accomplishment" of personally "having wrecked a great power's national economy in the incredibly short span of thirty months"; he treats the Bolsheviks "as a disciplined order of professional committee men, grouped around a band of conspirators" (quoting Leonard Schapiro's 1960 formulation); and he argues that the Bolsheviks' "total unconcern" for "Russia" (gendered throughout as feminine) gave them "perhaps the single greatest advantage [they] enjoyed over their rivals." Each of these questions is complex, but surely the literature is now rich enough to allow historians to accept that militant industrial workers actively engaged successive Russian regimes without simply acting in response to the intellectuals' "prodding," and clearly the forces responsible for economic chaos in 1918 went beyond Iurii Larin's utopian intent. By perceiving workers as "idled" in February 1917 (a soldiers' revolt) by events beyond their control; by insisting that "radical intellectuals" were the "catalytic agents" of worker protests, that workers "shifted loyalties" from the professional unions to their factory committees as transport and communication deteriorated, that Lenin "disguised his private army, initially called 'Workers' Militia,' as an innocuous guard to protect factories from looters" Pipes ignores the very social specificity of Russia's revolutionary conjuncture that does much to explain, among other things, precisely why the Bolsheviks' own dreams of world revolution were most likely to fail. Indeed, his emphasis seems at times to concede to Lenin and his comrades exactly the power they wrongly imagined they possessed.

The same problems emerge in connection with such questions as the social composition of Bolshevism both before and after October (its ranks were swelled above all, much recent evidence suggests, by the very workers whose interests Pipes insists the party was corrupting) and with the broader, complex problems of structural determinism, which at least to some extent affect all social change. While Pipes is clearly mindful of the structuring capacities of economic institutions and relations—indeed, it is a basic component of his Burkean outlook—his fixation in the Russian case on culpability leads to the suppression of fundamental interpretive issues concerning possible links between Russia's level of economic development, the inability of its economy to sustain the dislocations of war and consequent destructive emergencies of social deprivation and civil conflict, which in and of themselves prompted terrifying brutality on all sides. And surely the "Russia" with which Bolsheviks (and others) were so unconcerned during the revolutionary period was as much itself a construct of ideology as the "Soviet Union" was later to become, and hence equally vulnerable to the perils of delegitimization. Again, what is lost is an appreciation of the complexity and historical specificity of Russia's revolutionary condition, without which even the force of moral condemnation is compromised.

A long, detailed and exceptionally polemical volume, *The Russian Revolution* is scholarship distorted by politics and passion. Although it concludes with an expression of sadness many Western and Soviet readers will share, Pipes insists to the very end on imposing his own values on the past, arguing that those who experienced and survived the Revolution "would never see the return of normalcy," that "the Revolution was only the beginning of their sorrows." His anger and his intellect have only left new problems to be reckoned with, past and present, and made even more difficult the daunting and complementary tasks of historical understanding and contemporary transformation. □

Aesthetic Man

JEFFERY PAINE

VLADIMIR NABOKOV: The Russian Years. *By Brian Boyd. Princeton University Press. 607 pp. $25.*

Vladimir Nabokov concluded his autobiography, *Speak, Memory*, with almost a manifesto for, as he called it, "*Homo poeticus*—without which the *sapiens* could not have been evolved":

> "Struggle for life" indeed! The curse of battle and toil leads man back to the boar, to the grunting beast's crazy obsession with the search for food. . . . Toilers of the world, disband! Old books are wrong. The world was made on a Sunday.

Nabokov was formulating an opposition—and an alternative—not simply to Marx and Freud but to the very idea of Economic Man and of Psychological Man. For Nabokov, aesthetics was not a luxury to be indulged in the little margin left over after one's material needs and psychological drives were satisfied. Thus in his fiction he put under a magnifying glass specific, odd moments of time, to induce the pleasurable mild shock that ensues when the customary is seen in a different way. Nabokov held that every person can—and should—do this, that everyone is his or her own Aesthetic Man.

But was Nabokov's formula for happiness, his reordering of perception—which surprisingly resembles Rimbaud's derangement of the senses—really feasible for an "ordinary person" going about his or her day? Or was it, rather, a technical tool from the writer's workshop? Nabokov's own almost surreal perceptions depended upon an intense consciousness that was so wired he couldn't turn it off to sleep at night. Next to his happiness, the most revealing fact of Nabokov's life could be his insomnia: Insomnia might even pass as his private response to the Russian Revolution, as though never in history would it again be safe to turn out the lights.

This consciousness, awake night and day, is hailed by Nabokov's latest biographer, Brian Boyd, as the key to his fiction, although Boyd draws too quickly the corollary that this "fiction of consciousness" is the ultimate fiction. Nabokov's imagery is so acidly precise (summer suits are either "dove-gray, mouse-gray, or silver-gray") and his wording so exact and often rare (e.g., "chronophobiac," "tinnitus," "sedums and saxifrages") that a reader adheres to the literal meaning, does not dream or drift off among sub rosa intimations. For Nabokov, there was the unknown and the unknowable, but not the unconscious: His is a fiction without Freudian bogholes or the haunting shadow of the repressed.

Boris Pasternak once remarked that the subject in writing is there to distract the conscious mind, to allow what's important and which can happen only "behind one's back" to take place unobtrusively. Nabokov's hyperconscious fiction, however, allows little to take place behind one's back or below the surface. Nabokov found second-rate those writers who achieved their effects through rhetorical rhythms of language and subconscious resonances, whether in Russian or English, whether Dostoyevsky or Faulkner. His majestic ambition was to create con-

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scious new patterns: He concluded his autobiography by recalling a pottery fragment he found on a French beach in 1903 and imagining it might have the same pattern as a shard his mother found on a similar beach in 1882 and likewise the same pattern *her* mother might have found as a girl. Such satisfying, overbright correspondences substitute for the basic search for "meaning" that motivated writers like Faulkner and Dostoyevsky. Nabokov liked to pronounce that favorite writers, such as Hemingway or Conrad, were perfectly fine but were really writers for boys. Curiously, Nabokov's greatest fans are often in their twenties, an age when the break from traditional meanings and the substitution of dazzling artifice has the most appeal. It is perhaps, in this regard, not entirely a coincidence that Nabokov's two biographers, Andrew Field and Brian Boyd, are professors from New Zealand and Australia, away from the mainstream of European traditions.

Nabokov's superior aristocratic discriminations and his mandarin playful language have in some ways vexed his reputation. Even among his admirers there lurks a suspicion that Nabokov chased butterflies and perfected his style—first in Russian, then in English—while dictators lit the fuse and the world burned. "Many readers," Boyd says, "assume he is all style and no content." Boyd has written more than 500 pages—and even then has only maneuvered Nabokov through his first forty years—in order to make sure nobody dares think such foolishness again.

Boyd, an English professor at the University of Auckland, is an intelligent reader, a pleasant stylist and a rather peculiar biographer. He appears to conceive it as his duty to make extravagant boasts on behalf of his subject (comparisons to Shakespeare and Dostoyevsky will not be lacking) and to defend him from every adverse criticism; at times Boyd seems less Nabokov's biographer than his bodyguard. Having such a mahatma of literature for a subject, Boyd obviously felt it would be cheating his readers if he failed to include any fact or notecard, regardless how marginal.

Thus Nabokov, the controlled literary architect, here receives a biography that is less a dramatic narrative than an enormous chest of drawers full of heirlooms, genealogy charts, photographs, old newspapers, maps of St. Petersburg, political programs, butterfly wings, train schedules and anything else possible to discover.

Yet Boyd's fanaticism, his utter determination to take Nabokov "seriously," allows us to make connections between the life and the writing that Andrew Field's readable but unreverential *Nabokov: His Life in Part* blurred over. For if kept separate, Nabokov's life can seem only an émigré dandy's and his writing a species of art for art's sake. But Boyd weaves the living and the writing together, and—while too breathlessly claiming that Nabokov was "an epistemologist, metaphysician, moral philosopher, and an aesthetician"—he does make it quite plausible that Nabokov shaped a world view that genuinely responds to the politics and social crimes of the twentieth century. Nabokov's famous antipathies, which included not only Marx but also the "Viennese Quack," might make him seem a typical antimodern fuddy-duddy. The great merit of Boyd's study, despite its overheated claims, is that, if anywhere, it is here that one can test Nabokov's contention that Aesthetic Man is a more valid and more basic model of human experience than either Psychological or Economic Man.

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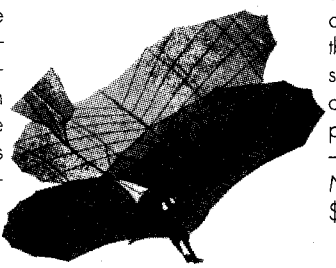

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According to common sense, Nabokov should have been a miserable being. In 1917, when the Bolsheviks were offing the Romanovs and otherwise burying the *ancien régime*, the 18-year-old Nabokov was forced to flee Russia, leaving behind a fortune worth several million dollars, a 2,000-acre estate and what he valued even more: "the beauty of intangible property, the unreal estate" of flora and fauna and affection where his memories were set. Exiled from Russia, he went from fairy-tale fortune to bare and continual poverty. A string of his mother's pearls, smuggled out of Russia, paid for his education at Cambridge, but he spent most of the next twenty years in Berlin, earning his daily bread in pettiness, doing secretarial work or tutoring, with a ringside seat at Hitler's rise to power. His detestation of the Nazis, who reminded him of the Bolsheviks, could only be worsened because his wife, Véra, was Jewish. Nabokov's life in Berlin began with his beloved father's assassination and ended with his brother Sergey being arrested as a homosexual (he would die in a concentration camp).

Nabokov had thus witnessed much of the evil that politics can do, and Boyd can easily refute the charge that Nabokov was an apolitical aesthete by tallying up his stories with a political theme, as well as his novels *Invitation to a Beheading* and *Bend Sinister* and the play *The Waltz Invention*, in which the German and Russian versions of totalitarianism blend together in surreal horror. Yet what is wrong about such a charge in the first place is that it misses Nabokov's challenge to the easy twentieth-century opposition between aesthetics and politics. For Nabokov, the artistic is the political precisely because it resists the totalitarian imperative (and, to a lesser extent, the democratic conformist urge) to reduce experience to a set of predictable responses.

Perhaps this resistance to the predictable found its origin in the sunny metaphysics under which Nabokov grew up, as his father, V.D. Nabokov, the beloved Constitutional Democrat, strove to convert Russia to a liberal regime where talents and reason could flourish: A miniature of such a regime was his own household. When 9-year-old Vladimir decided church was a bore, his father's response was, "You don't have to come then." The religious obsessions of Joyce, or indeed the miseries of most writers' youths, never becloud the blue skies of Nabokov's precocious upbringing.

From such a childhood, Nabokov passed into a fifty-year, happy marriage that is rarer among writers than the Cormion Blue is among the butterflies he hunted. All the wrecks and debauchery that can make a life so interesting to read about and so difficult to bear—the secret liaisons, the frustrated affairs, the one-night adventures—are to be found in Nabokov's story too, but compressed into a single precocious year, when he was 17 and squandered a fraction of his inheritance as a teenage roué in old Petersburg. Boyd confirms one brief extramarital affair Nabokov had in 1937, with the intelligent, beautiful and indeed quite suitable Irina Guadanini; but Nabokov found the deceit necessary to conduct an affair "vulgar," which is to say he soon ended it. "To those who saw Vladimir and Véra Nabokov at close range," Boyd comments, "they seemed like young lovers even in their sixties and seventies." In fact, the most striking fact about Nabokov's life to emerge in Boyd's rendering is its happiness, its luminescence. Nabokov originally titled his first novel *Happiness*, and in an early story he called one character "a pessimist and, like all pessimists, a ridiculously unobservant man." Once again, Boyd defines Nabokov's formula for happiness aesthetically: "Detach the mind from accepting a humdrum succession of moments, and everything becomes magical."

In the 1930s, however, the magic of Nabokov's fiction hardly seemed inventive, dazzling or elaborate enough, when the political world closing around him was ever more dark, lethal and brutally simplifying. When people spoke of Hitler, Nabokov would announce haughtily: "I am writing my novel. I do not read the papers." But that was talk, bravado; at almost the last moment, in 1937, the Nabokovs prudently fled Berlin for Paris. As Boyd's volume ends, in 1940 as the Germans are invading France, the Nabokovs—with the help of a Jewish refugee organization—are seen fleeing again, catching the last available boat to America. (When a boy, Nabokov had frequented "America," as the peat bog on the family estate was called because of its mystery and remoteness; to the real America he carried little more than his suitcases, in which, however, were manuscript drafts, later rewritten into English, for *Lolita* and *Pale Fire*.)

Nabokov went on to spend his energies representing and suggesting an alternative Russia—cultivated, independent, individualistic, playful—everything the drab Stalinist U.S.S.R. was not. He would

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make two claims for the old, prerevolutionary Russia: that it had created the greatest police state ever known, and the greatest culture. While Joe Stalin perfected the former heritage, Nabokov, "the Master," enriched the latter. □

Don't Worry, Be Happy

HILTON ALS

LUCY. *By Jamaica Kincaid. Farrar, Straus & Giroux. 164 pp. $16.95.*

With the publication of her short-story collection *At the Bottom of the River* in 1984, Jamaica Kincaid became our premier monologuist about the Caribbean. Focusing on her native Antigua, she wrested from it a variety of tales whose locus was dispossession: the emigrant who abandons the familiar in favor of self-invention in the new.

The means Kincaid has employed to examine this theme—fiction and the essay—have prompted two critical reactions. For works like *River* and the first-person coming-of-age novel *Annie John* (1985), she has been lauded as a "poet of the particular" whose eye for the minutiae of daily life in Antigua was remarked on as being sensitive, vital, "true."

As an essayist, she has fared badly. *A Small Place* (1988), her report on returning to Antigua after an absence of twenty years, was, on the whole, either ignored or reviled. Stripped of her fictional voice, Kincaid's "I" was deemed intolerable, too insistent in its felt language of invective hurled against "you"—the white tourist—on holiday in Antigua: "An ugly thing, that is what you are when you become a tourist . . . pausing here and there to gaze at this and taste that."

The success of the tour that readers and critics made through Kincaid's work was based on whether or not the local color rendered in it was sufficiently exotic. What they wanted was a taste of her native food—the preparation of which she had described in her fiction—but not the story of how that food was procured. They wanted to gaze at her landscape but do so without seeing what she saw in *A Small Place*: drought, disease, poverty and black native bodies condemned to the stench of no future at all. In short, what Kincaid's critical readership wanted was not so much a writer as a primitive who wrote, and whose charm lay in the "innocence" of her vision.

Admittedly, such a reading would be difficult to avoid if you took Kincaid's early work at face value. As seen through the idyll of youth—as in *River* and *Annie John*—Antigua is a beautiful place, with its "sea, the shimmering pink-colored sand, the swimmers with hats." But lurking, always, on the periphery of her glistening prose were the shadows of British colonialism, the black Antiguan's history of slavery and the division of black from white. From *Annie John*: "Ruth [a classmate] had come all the way from England. . . . Perhaps she wanted to be in England, where no one could remind her constantly of the terrible things her ancestors had done. . . . She had such a lot to be ashamed of, and by being with us everyday she was always being reminded."

In *A Small Place* and her latest novel, *Lucy*, Kincaid reminds the reader, again and again, of the "terrible things" power can instigate, such as the desire, for a time, to abandon "poor sap countries like Antigua," develop a history apart, the better to chart the eternal return of the native bearing tales of the outside world.

Lucy is the first-person narrative of a young woman who has come from Antigua to an undisclosed North American city. By some arrangement, she has become the au pair ("The Girl" to some) of four small girls, the children of Lewis, a lawyer, and his wife, Mariah. In her room—the maid's room—and, later, in the family's country home, Lucy abandons her studies as a nurse to embark on her true vocation: "I understood I was inventing myself, and that I was doing this more in the way of a painter than in the way of a scientist. I could not count on precision or calculation; I could only count on intuition." And it is as a burgeoning artist that we see Lucy live her first year abroad, inside a sensibility that does not attach itself to people—not her companion Peggy, an Irish girl with whom she eventually rooms; not her lovers Hugh or Paul; not Lewis. None of them speak in a language Lucy understands or cares to hear: She is intent on developing her own voice. James Baldwin once wrote: "For a very long time the

Hilton Als is a staff writer at The Village Voice.

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troubles of white people failed to impress me as being 'real' trouble." One suspects that part of the negative criticism leveled at Kincaid for *Lucy* has to do with her protagonist's failure to accede to white people—i.e., power—as a determining factor in her life. No one holds sway over Lucy's internal or external self. Her remarkable power derives from Kincaid's cool dissection of class and race, in which she makes the reader responsible for the folly and waste that Lucy observes. As one rarely seen if at all heard, Lucy transforms her invisibility as a servant, as a woman and as a black, into her power, the power of the artist who will have the last word. "[Mariah] had too much of everything, and so she longed to have less: less, she was sure, would bring her happiness. To me it was a laugh and a relief to observe the unhappiness too much can bring; I had been so used to observing the results of too little."

When my mother immigrated to New York from Barbados in the 1940s, her first jobs were doing "day work." No matter what the weather, she had to stand on a particular street corner in a section of Brooklyn where cars cruised and eventually stopped, searching the faces and bodies of young girls deemed suitable for work. In their homes, my mother heard many things: the acquisition of this, liquidation of that. Sometimes these people spoke of my mother in her presence in the third person. My mother used to say, "Doesn't matter what they say. You know your name." *Lucy* ends when she—at last—takes up her "fountain pen full of beautiful blue ink," writes her full name across the top of a page, and then this: "I wish I could love someone so much that I would die from it."

What Kincaid loves are the people of Antigua. It is, indeed, a love her writer's voice could have "died" of eventually had she not distanced herself from it, discovering, in exile, the discipline necessary to cultivate it. Had she not been a "dispossessed" Antiguan, the distance and love inherent in her brilliant *A Small Place* would not have been possible. Like Naipaul before her, Kincaid makes her past even more frightening through the dissection of the present. Unlike Naipaul, she shows no bitterness in the face of it, no shame and no regret: "I look at these people (Antiguans) and I cannot tell whether I was brought up by, and so come from, children, eternal innocents, or artists who have not yet found eminence in a world too stupid to understand, or lunatics who have made their own lunatic asylum, or an exquisite combination of all three." This is the prose equivalent of Derek Walcott's poetic evocation of identity lost and found in "North and South."

A Small Place focuses on Antiguans—the descendants of slaves—living in a community dropped in upon by the tourist—frequently descendants of slave owners—each unclear and uncertain of how to use language as a tool to describe and interpret their identities, their separate histories.

The tourist does not exist in the "real" of daily life in Antigua; a native can do little but. The native cannot see himself, so involved is he in the repetition of habit. The native is plagued by racism, illiteracy, poor health care. The tourist will continually exercise his option to pay to see nothing at all. "That the native does not like the tourist is not hard to explain. . . . [The natives] cannot go anywhere. They are too poor. . . . They envy your ability to turn their own banality and boredom into a source of pleasure for yourself."

Writing in Condé Nast's *Traveler*, Erroll McDonald said of *A Small Place*: "Obsessed as she is . . . with decrying the history of the greed and cruelty of British colonialism . . . she never allows for sheer goodwill among consenting adults."

What McDonald unwittingly plays into here is the critic's standard relationship to the literature of the so-called exotic. Since the time of Claude McKay, whose fame as a writer of poems in Jamaican dialect reached its apex in the 1930s, critics have most often expressed a preference for West Indian literature only when "goodwill" was written in the margins. No anger, just rum and rhythm. Happy wit' plenty o' nuttin'. If Kincaid does not support the critical fantasy of the "island girl" who writes, critics are robbed of their paradigm. In her *New York Times Book Review* treatment of *Lucy*, Thulani Davis wrote: "I found it difficult to recognize the lively, curious and engaged child Annie in the angry but disengaged Lucy."

The collective American fantasy revolving around the Caribbean and the native is popular again just now, evidenced in the success of the current Broadway "hit" *Once on This Island*, and in culture czar David Byrne's appropriation of Afro-Caribbean rhythms into his music, which he has remarked has made it sound "happier." In *Lucy* and in *A Small Place*, Jamaica Kincaid destroys

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this fantasy, in language that is completely hers, naming the world in a voice as disagreeable and stunning as it need be: "I did not like the name Lucy—I would have much preferred to be called Lucifer outright—but whenever I saw my name I always reached out to give it a strong embrace." □

Bell-Bottom Blues

GILBERTO PEREZ

In May 1973 Jean-Luc Godard wrote a letter to his old friend and colleague François Truffaut in which he started by calling him a liar:

> Yesterday I saw *La Nuit américaine.* Probably no one else will call you a liar, so I will. It's no more an insult than 'fascist,' it's a criticism. . . . Liar, because the shot of you and Jacqueline Bisset the other evening at Chez Francis is not in your film, and one can't help wondering why the director is the only one who doesn't screw in *La Nuit américaine.*

La Nuit américaine, or *Day for Night*, is a film about filmmaking that was a big hit for Truffaut; it went on to win the Oscar for best foreign film. But Godard was quite right: It is the film of a liar—and not just because the director in it, played by Truffaut himself, a notorious womanizer who at the time was involved with the star, is made chaste and sweet to the point of saintliness. This dishonesty Godard accurately considered symptomatic of the film's larger dishonesty. *La Nuit américaine* wears the flat sentimental smile of a dissembler and is as phony and empty as it is eager to please.

In the same breath, however, that he put down Truffaut and his dissembling film, Godard, with some effrontery, asked him to invest in a project of Godard's own: "You ought to help me, so that the public doesn't get the idea we all make films like you." By "we all" Godard no doubt meant the filmmakers of the Nouvelle Vague, the once youthful challengers of convention who, starting in 1959 with such films as Truffaut's *The 400 Blows* and Godard's *Breathless*, gathered as a "new wave" in French cinema that crested in the early sixties. By 1973 the energies of this Nouvelle Vague were largely spent. Truffaut had long since given over to a safe-playing gentility; after three or four good films he tamely devoted most of the rest of his career to making just the sort of "well-made" film that as a young critic he had passionately denounced. The commercially compromised received a letter from the politically uncompromising. Godard had become radicalized since 1968 and had begun making films no longer as an individual artist but as a member of the militant Dziga Vertov Group. He had more or less given up the attempt to reach an audience beyond the converted—the converted not only to a politics but to a regimen of unpleasure in art seen as the right way to communicate that politics. The fluffily agreeable received a letter from the rigorously disagreeable.

The reply was angry and lengthy. In its inventory of all that was wrong with Godard it never got around to explaining why the director is the only one who doesn't screw in *La Nuit américaine*. Together with the arousing letter it is included in the recently published *Correspondence* of Truffaut, who died in 1984; a mellowed Godard wrote a foreword to this collection of his friend's letters. Showing no such mellowness, however, two reviewers (one in a leading neoconservative, the other in a leading liberal, organ of our culture) make these letters that are about many other things the occasion for attacks on Godard, enlisting the anger Truffaut vented against him. Both John Simon in the *New Criterion* and Julian Barnes in *The New York Review of Books* relish every item in Truffaut's enumeration of Godard's flaws and failings.

Why this animosity? Simon's goes back to the sixties, when, in his posture of cultural bully, he railed against Godard (see the essay in his *Private Screenings*) for pages on end of uncomprehending invective. Barnes tells us how impressed he was by *Breathless* when he saw it in his youth, but now, having grown wiser as he assures us, he has come to see Godard's film as "a tremendous display of style desperately searching for content." (Searching, questioning, Godard has indeed been, but Barnes seems to think of content as something that ought to be comfortably settled, like warm water in a bathtub.) "The closeness of Truffaut and Godard at the time . . . was

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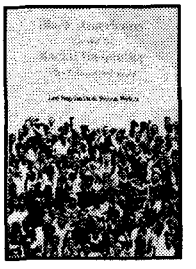

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deceptive," Barnes continues. "Truffaut was, as it were, just trying on the bell-bottoms; Godard was laying in a lifetime's supply." Truffaut trying on the bell-bottoms made his best film, *Shoot the Piano Player* (so thinks Simon, and in this I agree). But Barnes's animosity has something to do with bell-bottoms: Evidently it is an animosity toward the sixties. If one filmmaker were to be singled out as emblematic of the sixties, which was a great period for films, Godard would have to be the one.

In associating Godard with bell-bottoms Barnes means to dismiss him as a mere sixties fad; in having bell-bottoms stand for the sixties Barnes means to belittle the whole period as just a phase we have been wise to outgrow. The specter of the sixties looms largest not for the nostalgic but for those who obsessively regret them and blame them and condemn them, for the neoconservative with a bad conscience, for the threatened liberal still afraid of them, afraid to let go of them lest they rise again. The much overrated Truffaut is being praised as the nice well-behaved kid among the bunch of sixties hoodlums epitomized by Godard. An attempt is being made to dispose of Godard and all that he represents artistically and politically.

It suits Godard's detractors to reduce him politically to the trendy, dreary politicizing of the Dziga Vertov Group; but the "Ursula Andress of militancy," as Truffaut called him, the preacher to the converted who much of the time seemed to be trying by rote to convince himself, is by no means the only political Godard. From the beginning his work has carried a political charge, and most of the many attacks on his art over the years have been to a significant degree politically motivated. Following *Breathless* he made, in 1960, the much less famous but even more remarkable *Le Petit Soldat*, which for three years the French government suppressed: like *Breathless* a film about life lived in the moment, but now both the personal and the political moment. The burning political issue in France at that moment, the Algerian war, *Le Petit Soldat* addressed with an implicative urgency summed up in the image of a hesitant assassin walking behind his victim with a large pointed pistol along a crowded street without attracting anybody's notice—a startling image of the daily unbelievability of political violence.

As the protagonist and narrator, the central consciousness of this spy thriller taking over the space of real life, Godard purposely chose a character on the wrong side of the struggle, an opinionated young man working for the right-wing French as a terrorist against the Arabs and their sympathizers: the existential hero as a callow intellectualizing fascist thug. Neither likable nor simply dismissible, a figure who leads us into the story but does not command our allegiance, this protagonist was Godard's way of putting the questions to us, leaving us on our own to find our bearings in a critical situation. *Le Petit Soldat* is a rare political film that takes sides (with the cause of Algerian liberation) but does not pick sides for us. Attacked from the right and from the left as well, the film conformed to nobody's prejudices and made everybody uncomfortable. Politics is the tragedy of our time: So, as quoted by a character in the film, said Napoleon.

Godard's detractors reduce him to trendy, dreary politicizing—the 'Ursula Andress of militancy.'

Godard was the most renewing and the most enduring of the filmmakers of the Nouvelle Vague. Longer and more profoundly than any of the others he sustained the challenge to convention, the readiness to take risks, the spirit of excited exploratory possibility. A prime artist of the sixties and shaper of the temperament of those years, he remained all through the decade a very controversial figure, much admired by some and as much detested by others; all through the decade he continued to make people uncomfortable. Keeping up with his films as they were coming out, one or two or maybe three beautiful and bewildering films a year—*My Life to Live*, *Contempt*, *Alphaville*, *Pierrot le fou*, *Masculine-Feminine* and *Two or Three Things I Know About Her*, among others—films by turns or even at once frustrating and exhilarating, flippant and moving, uncouth and exquisite; films one often didn't know quite what to make of and argued about and changed one's mind about; films that engaged one on many shifting levels and refused to stay put in one's response, was a heady experience of art in the making. Godard's importance, said the theater and film director Peter Brook at the time, is that he gives the cinema not just mobility of camera but mobility of thought:

> He liberates the picture from its own consistency, so that at one second you are genuinely looking at a photograph of three people in a bar, then you are half alienated, then three-quarters alienated, then you are looking at it as a film, then as something made by a filmmaker, then you are reminded that it is made by actors, and then you are thrown right back into believing it. This is the changing relationship that you have in Shakespeare.

For some the sixties began in 1968; but in 1968 in this country, with the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert Kennedy and the election of Nixon that started us on the road to Reagan, the hopeful sixties received a fatal blow. In France the rebellion of May 1968, which one can see coming in Godard's splendidly attentive *La Chinoise* of the year before, enacted a revolutionary aspiration that swept along Godard. In 1968 Godard's sixties ended: The period of open-eyed questioning and spirited path-breaking innovation that began with *Breathless* ended with *La Chinoise* and the first half of *Weekend*. What followed was a Godard wholly politicized but impoverished politically as well as artistically. This Godard did not last that long; the Dziga Vertov Group disbanded in 1973, a little after the letter to Truffaut; but a newer Godard has been slow to take shape.

Godard turned 60 in December. The Film Forum in New York has been celebrating the occasion (through February 7) with a welcome month's sampling of his work that understandably emphasizes the sixties. Not included is perhaps his best film of the seventies, *Ici et ailleurs* (co-directed by Anne-Marie Miéville, who since the mid-seventies has been his collaborator and companion), an inquiry into the Palestinian situation and our pictures and conceptions of it done in the form of a reworking, a rethinking, of a film for the P.L.O. left unfinished by the Dziga Vertov Group. Of course included is what the program notes call "the director's return from the wilderness," his much praised 1980 *Sauve qui peut (la vie)*, or *Every Man for Himself*, a film impressive in stretches but on the whole rather morose and unengaging. The sampling closes with a mid-

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eighties double bill of *First Name: Carmen* and *Hail Mary*, women fatal and germinal, films put together as tremulous mosaics. Nothing is included of the more recent work, even though it has been getting better and better: the somberly resplendent *Detective*, the brusquely elegiac contemporary *King Lear* and, most mysteriously consummate, the director's latest, titled *Nouvelle Vague*. Godard, it seems, is losing his precariously regained audience just as his films are regaining something like their former edge and excellence.

Nouvelle Vague played this fall at the New York Film Festival but failed to be picked up for American release. Obscure yet luminously beautiful, the film unfolds as a kind of pastoral in a Swiss lakeside landscape that for the director, who grew up in Switzerland, holds memories of childhood. Rather than the rush and temper of the here and now, the light of *Nouvelle Vague* carries the ghostly dimming beauty of vanishing summer; in this film as in Nash's poem, "brightness falls from the air." Perhaps the great visual beauty of *Nouvelle Vague* is not enough to make it a great or even a good film; but one cannot begin to deal with the film unless one can see that breathtaking beauty. Vincent Canby of *The New York Times* couldn't see it: He pronounced the film "pretty as a feature-length lipstick commercial."

If Godard is out of fashion nowadays, so, in many quarters, is beauty. Postmodernists mostly disown it. As a quality men see in women ("Beauty is pleasure regarded as the quality of a thing," said Santayana), feminists largely discountenance it. The Thatcherite aesthetician Roger Scruton thinks it too imprecise a notion for meaningful consideration; but an aesthetician who cannot talk about beauty had better find another line of work. On the left, beauty is suspected both of being elitist, the plaything of a privileged few, and of being a whore seductively selling the ideology of the ruling class. In the puritanism of today, a puritanism on the right and on the left, beauty is to be approached with the protective crucifix of (right or left) political correctness.

Nouvelle Vague is a thing of beauty and at the same time a critique of that beauty, of the conditions of that beauty: a critique that unsettles our response and disallows our complacency but does not diminish our enraptured appreciation.

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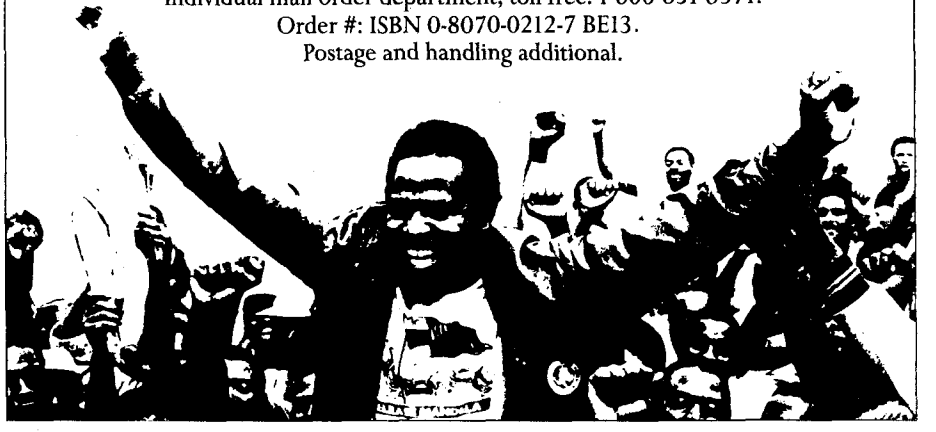

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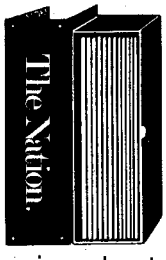

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The film's main setting is a luxurious country estate that provides a luxuriant pastoral of encroaching autumn. Better go to Vermont for the turning foliage, Canby advised readers of the *Times*: Have your autumn pastoral unperturbed by a recognition of the privilege enabling your pleasure. For the film complicates its pastoral and calls it into question by bringing forward the privilege, the unfeeling exploitative privilege, by which the feelingful pleasures of pastoral usually come to be secured. Sidney's Arcadia, as Raymond Williams reminds us in *The Country and the City*, was "written in a park which had been made by enclosing a whole village and evicting the tenants."

In *Nouvelle Vague* the exploitative privileged are of the particularly unfeeling contemporary corporate ilk, whose business deals and personal relations, in Godard's mordant mis-en-scène, transpire in unseemly cohabitation. We are confronted with a contradiction between stirring beauty and the ugly privilege enabling that beauty. The beauty arising from privilege, as the film tacitly yet keenly puts to us, can be enlisted to uphold but also to defy and disrupt the premises of that privilege. By embodying an aspiration, a reaching for an alternative to the existing order, beauty can challenge the present—but only if, as Godard's does, it acknowledges rather than dissembles the activity and the conditions that make for it.

Godard is one of the artists of our time (Brecht is another) who has refused to choose between poetry and politics. His Dziga Vertov period aside, he has persistently worked at the complex juncture of the personal and the social, the self and history. His portrayal of the relations between men and women, for example—and *Nouvelle Vague* offers a kind of summing up of that portrayal—has been both romantic, at times ecstatically lyrical, and sharply demystifying of romanticism by bringing its dreams of erotic transcendence back to the material ground of history and society. Autumn leaves might seem to belong outside the realm of politics; but, lyrically though he contemplates them, not for Godard. □

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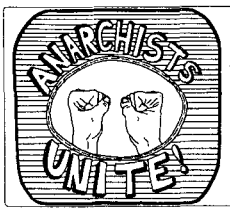

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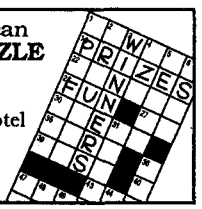

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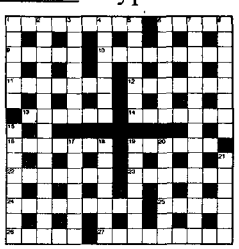

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		O	P	P	O	R	T	U	N	I	T	Y		
	A		R		S		I		O		R		O	
I	N	T	O		M	I	M	I	C		O	N	C	E
	G		P		O		E		T		U		T	
S	O	P	H	I	S	T		D	U	S	T	P	A	N
	R		E		I		U		R				V	
C	A	C	T	U	S	E	S		N	A	T	I	O	N
			I				H				R			
K	N	O	C	K	S		E	M	P	H	A	S	I	S
	E				H		R		A		D		N	
R	E	D	C	O	A	T		L	I	M	E	A	D	E
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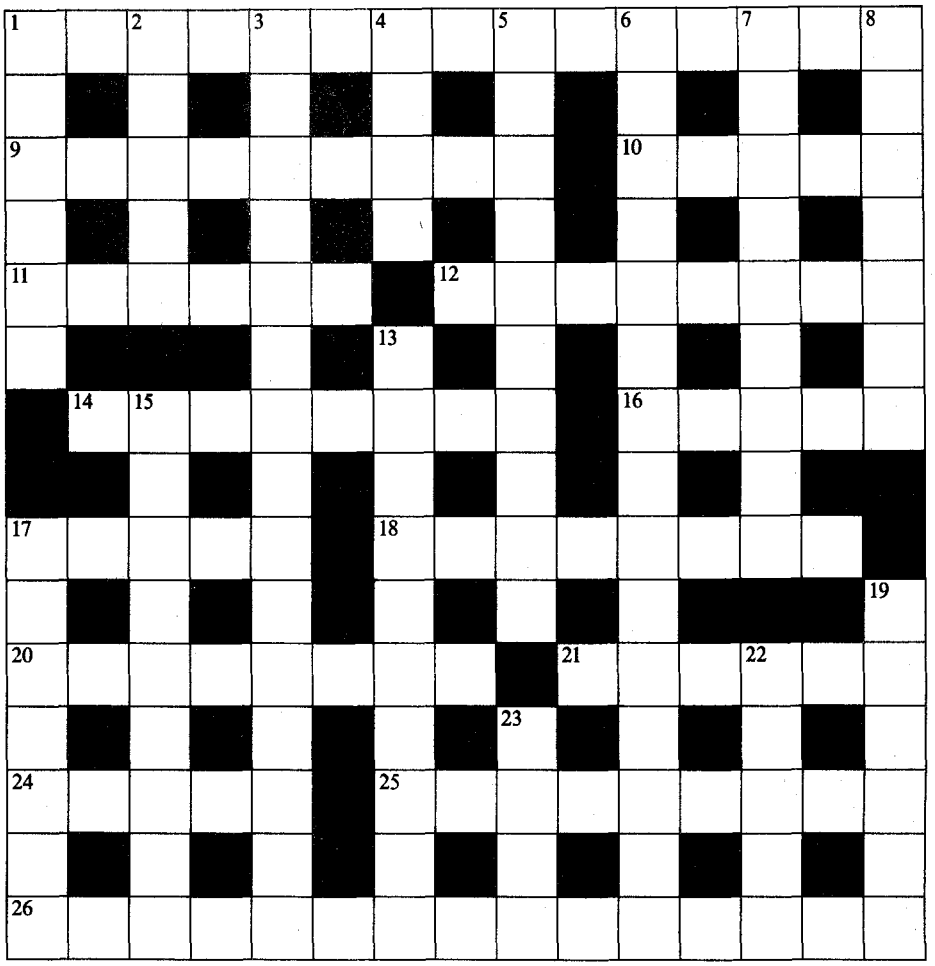
Crossword Puzzle No. 2324

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 Don't expect to win if you do! (4,1,6,4)
9 Let sunset change what trouble does at times. (9)
10 Plane crash in the Himalayas? (5)
11 Flower supposedly very pretty, but seemingly downcast? (6)
12 Looking back in Dorset or Raglan punishes in a way that certainly causes a lack of inspiration! (8)
14 Returning, Luce misses the point about the floor version, and you may miss a lot if you get such things down in black and white. (8)
16 Lies very casually, but to no purpose. (5)
17 Perhaps you'll find a trace of what some do with food. (5)
18 Fancy? No! (Surely you can see something serving for guidance!) (8)
20 Note: Soap product or other things may be measured by it. (8)
21 What this old hunter's helper does is 1 down! (6)
24 A hit I made in the Caribbean, with a spot of trouble, possibly. (5)
25 Such a type might flip, when an Arctic boa is produced! (9)
26 What the laundry might do to your pants sounds done! (5,3,7)

DOWN

1 Repeatedly hits the jackpot, perhaps, in London. (6)
2 Sometimes caused by a burning desire? (5)
3 Such as *The Life of Ford?* (15)
4 Paintings that went up in price very sharply recently? (4)
5 Most fashionable with procrastination, when setting up new equipment. (10)
6 A high-ranking turnout for "Officer's Call" with diplomats coming from all over! (7,8)
7 Served as a whetting device? (9)
8 A version of the silents that showed what a soldier sometimes does. (7)
13 Mad about these puzzles! You might be one! (10)
15 What one gets out of the act is zero put in Coventry, as the British say. (9)
17 Come even with what may go on the dog? (7)
19 A warp-knit fabric is partly electric, otherwise. (6)
22 Some church-goers consider it comes up with the thing to do, regularly. (5)
23 Grain, perhaps, cut short with a riding whip. (4)

SEE LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION AT LEFT

PUZZLED?

No more cross words. If you don't see why "Lures" are "Ground Rules," send for those of Mr. Lewis to *The Nation*, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.

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INTELLECTUALS AND RELIGION

Recently *The New York Times Magazine* carried an article on the "return to religion" among intellectuals. From Harvard to Berkeley, among both professors and students, and amid inquisitive people generally, there is an undeniable renewal of interest in the questions traditional religion raises and seeks to answer. This interest is largely a result of the failures of secular substitutes for religion (such as rationalism, narcissism, technological utopianism, aestheticism, and extremist political ideologies) to give abidingly satisfying answers to the truly significant puzzles in life: goodness, suffering, love, death, and the meaning of it all.

By no means, however, does this religious reawakening entail having any truck with Jimmy Swaggart's weird motel bills or Tammy Bakker's real-life impersonations of Imelda Marcos, or embracing the ersatz gods of dog-eat-dog individualism, consumerism, or America First. Nor does the religious renaissance imply a retreat from working for peace and justice. Rather, there is an awareness that, in the words of Jean Bethke Elshtain, religious commitment "can help further social reform," and that religion can supply the ethical bedrock upon which to make political commitments which are far more solid than those based on passing ideologies and enthusiasms. Nor does the new openness to religion signify a hostility to science, but rather an appreciation of the limits of science and the dangers of pseudo-scientific messianisms.

The New York Times Magazine article discussed the NEW OXFORD REVIEW as part of this "return to religion," and rightly so. We at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW are spearheading today's intellectual fascination with what Daniel Bell terms "the sacred." We are particularly interested in exploring religious commitments which result in progressive social consequences, as exemplified by such giants as Dorothy Day, Archbishop Tutu, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Simone Weil, Martin Luther King Jr., Cesar Chavez, and Archbishop Romero. And we probe the literary riches offered by such greats as Ignazio Silone, Graham Greene, Thomas Merton, W.H. Auden, Flannery O'Connor, and T.S. Eliot.

An ecumenical and literary monthly edited by lay Catholics, we've been characterized by the University of Chicago's Martin E. Marty as "lively" and by *Newsweek* as "thoughtful and often cheeky." And there's no denying the *Library Journal*'s verdict that we will "doubtless command increasing attention."

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